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BEADLE'S

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# POCKET NOVELS



## The Man in Green.





THE END OF THE WORLD

THE END OF THE WORLD



# THE MAN IN GREEN;

OR,

## THE SIEGE OF BEXAR.

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BY J. STANLEY HENDERSON,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING POCKET NOVELS:

131 RED PLUME.  
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137 KIDNAPPED.  
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THE MALL A GREEN

THE SIEGE OF BEAVER

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BY THE AUTHOR OF THE  
ADVENTURE OF THE BROWN BOY  
IN THE MOUNTAINS  
AND THE BROWN BOY  
IN THE MOUNTAINS  
AND THE BROWN BOY  
IN THE MOUNTAINS

NEW YORK:  
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# THE MAN IN GREEN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ONLY A PAIR OF EYES.

"I'm doubting, Master Frank, whether you r'ally know whar' you are now."

"I must confess, Bill Robbins, that I am out of my latitude, if not out of my longitude, also."

"Anon?"

"I mean, old friend, that I have lost my reckoning, though I suppose we are not a thousand miles from Bexar."

The first speaker was a man dressed in the garb of a hunter, or woodsman—coarse hunting-shirt, leather leggings, fur cap, and moccasins. He was tall, lank and sinewy, seeming to have no flesh on his bones, and the skin of his weather-beaten face appeared to be of the color and toughness of parchment. His hair and beard were thickly sprinkled with gray, but his eyes had a youthful brightness and sharpness, and his countenance always wore a good-humored but earnest expression, which was a just index of his character. Such was Bill Robbins, who had acquired fame among the "Hunters of Kentucky," and had increased it on the plains and hills of Texas.

Frank Coyle, his companion, was a young man, with a beard of but a few years' growth. He was well developed, however, and looked, as he was, strong, active and manly. He, also, wore a hunting-shirt, but it was of finer material than that of Robbins, and had some pretensions to style, and his leggings were slashed below the knee in the Mexican style. His head was covered with a dark sombrero, which partially shaded his sunburned countenance.

The time was evening, in the latter part of November, in the memorable year, for Texas, 1835. The rainy season had not yet fairly set in, and the air was clear and comfortable.



The scene was a wooded eminence, whereon there was a little vale, or glen, and in the vale bubbled up the waters of a large spring, as clear, as bright and as pure as that element can be which is "distilled in the thunder-clouds, and filtered through the everlasting hills."

The young man reclined on the grass, while the old man was toasting some tempting slices of venison at a small fire, which operation he performed in a manner that proved him an experienced backwoods cook. Their long Kentucky rifles lay by their sides, and their horses were tethered near them, in the cover of the timber.

"You're right in that matter, Master Frank," said the old man, "though I can't allow that it's sayin' much for your judgment or your knowledge of signs and travel. If you had said not more'n ten or twelve miles—"

"I thought we must be as near as that to Bexar, but I was afraid of showing my ignorance."

"'Twouldn't have been a bad guess, my boy; though, if you had said six or seven, or even less, you would have been nigher the mark. I can't say adzackly, but I judge that we are not more than six miles from Gen'ral Cos and his crew of greasers."

"So short a distance! It is consoling to know that we are about as near to General Austin and his men."

"Considerable closer, my boy; for we can git into Austin's camp, but it's likely to be a long time before we find ourselves in the city."

"For my part, I must admit that I do not know in what direction lies the old town."

"The trail is easy, Master Frank. You see this spring? Thar's four such springs, and tha'r waters jine about a mile above Bexar. Foller the stream, and you will find the Mexicans, though they don't deserve to be thar', as they ain't overly fond of water. I reckon you couldn't scare a greaser worse than by threatening to wash him. But come, Master Frank; the venison is cooked just as it ought to be, and we had better pitch into it while it is hot."

Frank Coyle, not having a chair to draw up, moved himself and his rifle to the clean log on which the smoking slices of meat were laid, and proceeded to "pitch in" with the aid



of his hunting knife, washing down the luscious morsels with the cool and sparkling water of the spring. His companion, it is needless to say, did the same, and both showed the voracity of true hunters.

"You think, then, Bill Robbins," said Coyle, "that it will be a long time before we find ourselves in Bexar?"

"I'm afeard it will, my boy. Bexar is a strong town, and the Alamo is a strong fort, and thar's a big crowd of greasers in thar', of the best of the Mexican sort, such as that is, and it ain't so very bad, either, for the dogs *will* fight, till they get scared. Gen'ral Austin hasn't got any more volunteers than he ought to have. Besides, the rainy season is comin' on, and they'll be leavin' him in droves. Whatsoever he does will have to be done mighty soon, and he hasn't been makin' much headway so far. That's what makes me say, my boy, that I'm afeard it will be a long time afore we see the inside of the city."

"All very good reasons, and very well urged, I confess; but I tell you, Bill Robbins, that I must be within the walls of Bexar before many days."

"And I tell you, Frank Coyle, that you are on a wild-goose chase, if you are still thinkin' of that girl. I reckoned that, when you had come this far, you would have forgotten such foolishness, and would not be in a hurry to throw away your life for a pair of black eyes."

"What do you know about a girl with black eyes?" asked Coyle, looking up in surprise.

"I would have been blind as a bat, my boy, if I did not know all about it. The girl I mean is named Maria Saluda, and she is the same girl you met at Natchitoches, and follered on after for so many miles, stickin' to her like a burr to a woollen huntin'-shirt. Thar' was a priest and an old woman with her, and they shook you off at last, and you lost the trail, but you still kept circlin' and scoutin' about, so that it was really hard work for me to find you."

"Bill Robbins, you seem to know every thing."

"It was easy enough to know *that*. When I see a bee start off in a straight line, don't I know he's makin' for his home? When I see a herd of deer strikin' for a spring, don't I know they are goin' after water? I don't want nothin' to do with women folks *myself*, but they have tha'r natur's as



well as other critters. The girl was a rare beauty, *for a girl*, and her black eyes and rosy cheeks might play the Old Harry with a young chap who *can* fancy such soft and useless bein's; but, for a man like you, who was born for a hunter, to throw himself away in chasin' such small game—I tell you, Frank Coyle, it kinder riles me to think of it."

"You are older than I am, Robbins, and you have been differently raised. You can form no idea of how much I love that beautiful girl. I must have her or life will be worthless to me. My tract of land on the Brazos will make me a rich man if I live, and you know very well that I will need a wife."

"Thar' you are ag'in, with the talk of the settlements! I'm afeard you'll never be weaned, my boy, much as I've wished it. As for wives, they are to be had for the askin', without bump-in' your head ag'in stone walls. I s'pose the girl is a Catholic, and you would have no more chance among the priests than a rabbit among catamounts."

"She is not a Catholic, although a priest was with her, and that ugly old duenna was a Catholic. She is a good enough Protestant to love me and to defy the priests."

"Humph! The priests have got hold of her, though; and they'll take good care to keep her out of the reach of an American. The river, below Bexar, is lined with tha'r missions, as they call 'em, and it's likely they have stowed her away behind stone walls afore this."

"Would they leave her just in the route of the Texan army? General Austin has been encamped at the Mission Conception."

"What makes you think that she has gone to Bexar?"

"She left me a note, which I found after I lost the track, telling me that she was going to Bexar, to remain with her aunt. She is there now, and I must see her before they carry her off into Mexico."

"P'raps they've already taken her that way."

"It is possible; but I must run that risk. You must help me in this matter, Bill Robbins. If you are really my friend, you will do it."

"You know that I am really your friend, Master Frank, and a better friend, I think sometimes, than you are to yourself. I promised your father, afore he died, that I'd look after you while I lived; and I mean to do it, as long as you'll let me,



and as much longer as I can. I don't forget how good Colonel Coyle was to me, and that's just the reason, my boy, why I don't want you to be runnin' your head into danger for nothin' but a pair of black eyes."

"If you had ever been in love, you would not speak in that way. If you refuse to help me, old friend, I must help myself. I will dare any danger, and overcome any obstacle, for I must have her or die. You hear me, Bill Robbins, and you know that I mean what I say."

The old hunter shook his head, with a mournful air, as he replied:

"Yes, Master Frank, I know you ain't apt to shoot at random, or without a bullet in your gun, and it hurts me to hear you speak such words. They say that a wilful man must have his way, and I s'pose if this thing can't be got over, we must go through with it. But I do r'ally hope you'll think better of it."

"No hope or danger of that, old friend. Have you ever been in Bexar?"

"Wa-al—ya-as," reluctantly answered Robbins. "I've kinder been thar' once, I reckon."

"Then you can show me how to enter the town, and, once in, I can easily disguise myself, and I will go to her aunt's house, and if they dare to refuse her to me—"

"Hold on, my boy. Don't strike your flint afore the tinder's ready. Too many sparks, and too little fire. We'll talk about this matter some other time. We are forgittin' our smoke, and that's somethin' I don't like to miss. Hand me that tobacco-pouch, my boy, after you fill your own pipe."

As Frank knew that the old man's wish for silence was not to be disputed, he obeyed. Both pipes were filled, and Robbins took a brand from the smoldering fire, and held it to his fragrant tobacco. As he did so, he saw something green moving and rising out of a hollow before him.

"What's that?" he exclaimed, dropping the brand, and seizing his rifle.

Frank Coyle saw it at the same instant, and also had his rifle ready.

As the object slowly rose, they could dimly see, in the growing dusk, that it bore the form and features of a man.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE MAN IN GREEN.

"Shoot, if you want to," said the intruder. "You are two to one, and you may do it if you choose. But it is not worth while, for I am a friend. If you had been greasers, I would have killed you both before this; but I have heard you talk, and I know that you are true men."

Half ashamed, the two friends laid down their weapons, and Robbins, rising, held out his hand.

"Come forward," said he. "If you are a friend you are welcome. - You mustn't blame us, for no man can tell a friend from an enemy in the dark."

"That is right. I would have done the same thing. I am used to it. It is my business. I have so many enemies, that I have to watch them very closely."

As the stranger spoke, he advanced, and presented a figure that astonished the two friends even more than his sudden and mysterious appearance.

He was clad entirely in green—green hunting-shirt, green trousers, green slouched hat, and green poncho over his shoulders. On close inspection, also, it could be perceived that his green garments were of a fine and strong texture. There was nothing about him that was not green, except his boots and his gray hair, for his skin was of a strange, yellowish tint, that might well be called invisible green, and his eyes were unmistakably a greenish gray. His rifle, both stock and barrel, was green; the handle of the hunting-knife in his belt was green; his powder-horn was green, and a green bag hung at his side. Add to this, that he was tall and slim, with a slight stoop; that his hands were continually clutching in a nervous manner, and that his piercing, restless eyes were always moving, and never fixed on any object, and you have a faithful photograph of the man who made our two Kentuckians stare as they were not often wont to stare.

"Think I look queer, don't you?" he asked, with a savage smile, and a wild twist of his eyes. "If there was more light



you would think so, indeed. Some men have said so, but it is only a matter of taste, you know."

"What might your handle be, stranger?" asked Robbins.

"You mean my name, I suppose. Oh, it is Green—yes, Green. I should think you might have guessed it. You need not tell me yours, for I know them. You are from the States—from Kentucky—and are settled in Texas. No greasers are you—no greasers."

"Have you been listening to all we said?" asked Coyle, who was strongly interested in this grotesque creature, so choice in the use of his language, and so wild in his action. He was inclined to think that some crazy poet might have found the "lodge in a vast wilderness" that Cowper prayed for.

"Listening! Yes, I suppose you must call it listening; but I sincerely beg your pardon. I am not given to eavesdropping, but when I am watching for my enemies, my ears are sharp—very sharp."

"A' on't see how you managed to git so close to us, and stay so close, unbeknown to us," remarked Robbins. "I allow that few men can beat me at knowin' and practicin' the ways of the wood, and Master Frank, here, is no small chance of a hunter."

"Oh, I am a snake in the grass; I am a bird of the air; I am a lizard—yes, a lizard—that's what I am. I make no noise when I crawl. You should see me crawling after my enemies. But no; you could neither see nor hear me. They know nothing of me until I drop upon them, and then they are cold—very cold, but it is the coldness of death. Yes, I am a lizard."

"Lizard or no lizard, stranger, you're welcome to sit down and share our meal with us, such as it is, for I make no doubt you must be hungry."

"Thank you; I will sit, but I can not eat. I eat very little, and that little I carry here in my bag. It is not such as you eat, but it suits me."

Green, as he chose to call himself, sat down on the grass, and rolled his eyes in all directions, while Robbins and Coyle puffed clouds of wonderment from their pipes.

"You say that you have many enemies. May I inquire who they are?" asked Coyle.



"Certainly, young gentleman—for I perceive that you are a gentleman—and I will take pleasure in informing you. They are the greasers—the greasers and the priests. Ah! if they all had but one heart, how gladly I would bore a hole through it with my rifle! You would not believe me, sir, if I should tell you how many of them I have sent to their long rest, and, indeed, I do not know."

"I can't understand how so old a man as you are can undergo the fatigues and hardships of a life in the woods—of such a life as you appear to lead."

"So old a man? Yes, I am old; but the number of my days has not been as great as you may think. In one day I lived twenty years, if I remember rightly, and after that the years more than doubled themselves, until I commenced to kill the greasers. Every greaser I kill makes me younger; but each one only takes off a month. A priest counts me five years. Last year I was much older than I am now."

"He is as crazy as a loon," whispered Robbins.

"Crazy? Aha! you don't know how sharp my ears are! If you could see me sometimes, you would think I *was* crazy; some men have said I was crazy, but that is only a matter of opinion, you know."

"What have the greasers done to you," persisted Frank, "that makes you hate them so violently? They must have committed some awful outrage, some terrible crime, to compel you to pursue them so relentlessly."

"An outrage! a crime!" exclaimed the old man, springing to his feet, rolling his eyes, and shaking his clenched fists at the empty air. "God in heaven knows that there are worse devils on earth than the infernal region can hold. Speak not to me such barren words as outrage and crime. There are things for which no names have been invented. Where are my wife and my child? What death did they die? But that is nothing. The dearest ties are nothing. All manner of cruelty is nothing, compared—aha! you shall not drag the secret from me. They have marked me, as you see, for time as well as for eternity. Look at my face. Is it the face of a man or of a fiend? That, too, 's their work—the work of the priests, aided by the willing greasers, and they shall *all* die! I tell you, sir, that God has written a judgment against



the people of Mexico, and they shall all die. Many years will roll away, but each year will claim its victims, and the priests shall fade away in misery, and the greasers shall *all* die!"

The old man shuddered, like one in a convulsion, then sunk upon the ground, covered his face with his hands, and sat as silent and motionless as if he had been struck into stone. Robbins and Coyle looked at each other, with glances expressive of awe as well as wonder.

After a few moments, Green looked up, and spoke in placid and gentle tones that were a singular contrast to his previous utterances.

"Pardon me, my friends," said he, "if I have intruded upon you, or disturbed you. If my presence causes you any uneasiness, or is unpleasant to you, you have only to hint it, and I will leave you."

"No, no, old man," quickly answered Robbins, whose natural kindness and sense of justice had got the better of his suspicions. "So long as you hate the greasers, you can't be any thin' but a friend of ours, and you're welcome to camp with us, and to share alike in all things."

"It is enough. I will stay."

Without another word, the stranger laid down, and was asleep almost immediately.

"Queer critter," whispered Robbins, as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

As Coyle had no reply to make to this sapient remark, both rolled themselves up in their blankets, and followed the example of the Man in Green.

Frank Coyle, however, could not sleep until he had turned over and over in his mind the subject of this strange and grotesque intruder. Was he a lunatic—or what? If he was crazy, there was a wonderful method in his madness, and it might prove a very valuable madness to those whom it would serve. He was, evidently, a man of education and refinement; even his woodsman's apparel showed good taste and a regardlessness of expense. Frank could not help believing that he had, at some time, been terribly ill-treated, in person, in family, or in property, or in all, by the Mexicans and their priests. The more than ghastly hue of his face could not be accounted for by any natural causes, and he said that they had marked him.



Frank finally concluded that he was partially insane, but that his insanity was harmless to any except those whom he considered his enemies. Having settled this question to his satisfaction, the young men fell asleep.

Bill Robbins was a man who always slept, as he was wont to say, with one eye and both ears open, and Frank Coyle, as his friend had observed, was "no small chance of a hunter." Imagine, therefore, the utter astonishment of these worthies, when, on awaking at dawn, they found the material for a fire already prepared and arranged, and the fire ready to be lighted, while near it sat the Man in Green, rolling his eyes and clutching his hands as usual.

They sat up, rubbed their eyes, and looked at each other in amazement, totally unable to comprehend such a state of things. At last the old hunter's tongue got loose.

"Who in thur ler fixed up that timber for a fire?" he exclaimed.

"I did it, my friend," quietly answered Green. "I hope there was no harm in it. I only wished to make some slight return for your hospitality."

"The dogs you did! Do you really mean to say that you have been and brought that timber, and have fixed it thar' for a fire, without our knowing it?"

The Man in Green pointed to the pile of wood and brush.

"It is ever so," said he, "and I hope you are not angry; the truth is, I smelt a greaser. My ears are sharp as you know, and my eyes are sharp, but nothing can equal the keen scent of my nose. I smelt a greaser, and went to seek him; I found him, and left him where I found him. There are more of them about—plenty of them. You had better get your breakfast and start, if you mean to reach General Austin's camp."

"If you say you put that truck thar', stranger, I'm bound to believe you," said Robbins, doubtingly; "but I reckon the Old Harry had somethin' to do with it."

His doubts did not prevent him from lighting the fire and preparing breakfast, which was speedily cooked and eaten by the two hunters. The Man in Green contented himself with a small portion of the contents of his bag, which was what is known



among the Mexicans as "cold flour," being simply parched, compounded, and slightly sweetened and spiced. This simple but nutritious food he mixed with water and drank, and seemed well satisfied with his meal.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### QUITE A SKIRMISH.

"WHAR'S your hoss, stranger?" asked Robbins, when he and Coyle had mounted, and were ready to leave their camp.

"I have no horse," answered the Man in Green. "What use have I for a horse? My enemies could hear the tramp of a horse, but they can not hear me. They could easily see the great four-footed animal, but they can not see the lizard that crawls. I have no need of a horse."

"I believe you, old man; if you did need one, I reckon a broomstick would serve you as well, for I'm really afeard that you are the devil or one of his agents."

The Man in Green spread his mouth in one of his ghastly grins, rolled his eyes and walked by the side of Frank Coyle's horse, quite as briskly as any young man might do.

"And so, my fine young gentleman, you wish to see the inside of the famous old town of San Antonio de Bexar," said the grotesque and mysterious stranger. "You shall see it if you wish to, and if you are willing to trust in me."

"Do you know the city?" asked Frank.

"I know it thoroughly. I ought to know it, if any man living ought to. I know every stone in the streets, every house, and every hole and corner."

"Don't listen to him, Master Frank," implored Robbins. "It is only a plan to bring you into trouble. The devil has a deep way of doin' business, and is always ready to lay holt of headstrong young fellers, who are willing to butt tha'r heads ag'inst stone walls."

"Have you been there lately?" persisted Frank.

"I was in Baxar two nights ago."



"Don't doubt it a bit," muttered Robbins. "He flew in on a broomstick, I reckon, and lit right down in the middle of the public square."

"Yes; I was in the public square. Aha! my ears are sharp, you know—I was in the public square, and I saw the artillery of General Cos, both in the square and on the roof of the church. I saw, also, a fine house on the north side of the square, which is occupied by a certain Señora Ladega, with whom is residing, at present, her niece, the beautiful Maria Saluda."

"Do you know her?" eagerly asked Frank; "are you sure that she is in the city?"

"Of course he knows all about her, and could tell you what she is doin' at this present minute," grumbled Robbins. "He knows too much for a human critter, Frank."

"If I do not know her, I know of her. Am I a man to seek the society of the fair, or to be sought by them? Is this face fitted to shine at their balls and gay assemblies? My enemies have marked me, young sir; they have made me a leper, a pariah, an outcast—worse than all these; but they shall die—greasers and priests—they shall all die!"

"Are you sure that she is in the city?" again asked Frank, when the old man's emotion had somewhat subsided.

"I know that she resides with her aunt, in the house of which I have spoken, and rumor says that they mean to marry her to Colonel Allende. You have no time to lose, young gentleman, if you wish to see her and to gain her."

"You speak truly, and I mean to lose no time. Who are they who seek to control her?"

"The priests—who else but the priests? They are wily, and cruel, and powerful; and those Mexican priests are capable of any thing."

"They shall not control her while I live, if a stout heart and a strong arm can prevent it. I will trust you, old man, and will be thankful for your aid."

"Mark my words, Master Frank!" said Robbins, suddenly reining in his horse; "I warn you to have nothing more to do with that man, if he is a man, for he will lead you to destruction. I am really afraid that you are so crazy about that black-eyed girl, that you would make a bargain with



Satan himself; but I warn you ag'inst it, Master Frank, and I will guard you ag'inst it while I can."

The mouth of the Man in Green again expanded in a ghastly grin, but neither replied to the old hunter, for at that moment a circumstance occurred to arrest their attention.

They had descended the hill, following the course of the stream, of which the spring they had left was the head, and had entered the open country, which was rough and seamed by ridges and ravines. They had reached a road that led in the direction of Bexar, when they perceived a party of mounted men approaching them from below.

Robbins and Coyle instantly had their rifles in readiness, and eagerly scanned the approaching party.

"Not so fast, my good friends," said the Man in Green. "My eyes are very sharp, and I assure you that those below are our friends. They are Texans, and are some of General Austin's men. You had better ride forward and meet them."

After a little hesitation, the two friends did what the old man suggested, and soon discovered that he had correctly informed them. The party numbered about twenty-five men, and was a detachment of Texan volunteers, who received the new-comers with open arms. Among them, Frank Coyle recognized and cordially greeted their commander, Captain Hays, who was also a Kentuckian, and was well known to both Coyle and Robbins. It was observable, and was a matter of surprise to Frank, that none of the party took any notice of the Man in Green, who stood at the side of the road, quietly leaning on his rifle. This was also perceived by Robbins, who was not slow in coming to the conclusion that this strange companion was some sort of an evil spirit, that appeared in bodily form to himself and his friend, but was invisible to the rest of mankind.

When greetings had been exchanged, Coyle asked Captain Hays whither he was going.

"We are scouting just now," answered the captain. "We want to cut off some reënforcements that are expected to arrive for the Mexicans."

"It seems to me that you have a slim force for such work. They will not be likely to send their reënforcements in small detachments."



"As for that," laughed Hays, "the more they send the better. We are willing to fight any reasonable or unreasonable odds. Twenty-five good Texan rifles are a match for any number of the cowardly greasers."

"I advise you not to be too confident. It is not safe to underrate an enemy."

"We have tried them, my boy, and know them better than you do. If you will go with us, I hope we will soon be able to show you a pretty fight, and let you see how the greasers can run."

"I am with you, and so, I have no doubt, is Robbins, and you can count on two good rifles. What say you, old friend?"

"You know I am keen for a skrinimage," answered the hunter, "and I reckon we will have one soon enough, judgin' by the sign."

He pointed toward the city, where a cloud of dust showed a movement of troops, and all eyes were turned in that direction.

"You are right," said Captain Hays, after a brief inspection. "They are cavalry from the city, and, unless I mistake, they belong to the Morelos battalion, as good troops as the greasers have. Some two hundred men, as near as I can judge. We might charge those fellows, and scatter them, but our lives are too valuable to be thrown away. Follow me!"

Turning his horse in another direction, he rode toward the east, followed by his command and the two friends, while the Man in Green trotted on behind.

"Strikes me that this looks like runnin' away," remarked Robbins.

"It won't look like it long," replied Captain Hays, as he led the way into a small ravine, which the whole party entered.

After securing their horses at the head of the ravine, they scrambled up the side, taking position at the edge, leaving only two men to guard the narrow entrance, which they were confident their adversaries would not dare to attempt to enter.

"As I know that you two are first-rate shots," said Captain Hays, "I will give you the posts of honor. You, Robbins, may take the right of the line, and you, Coyle, the left. I suppose you are willing to act under my orders."



"Certainly," answered Coyle.

"As for me," replied Robbins, "I am willin' to fight, but fightin' under orders is somethin' I ain't used to. I had rather do my fightin' on my own hook."

"You are of the same mind as I am," exclaimed the Man in Green. "I always fight on my own hook. We will fight together, my friend, and see which does the best work."

"Very well," said the captain, "fight as you please. Be ready, men, and let no one fire until I give the word."

The Mexicans, perceiving the retrograde movement of Captain Hays and his party, concluded that they were in retreat, and advanced with loud shouts and yells. They were not long, however, in discovering that their foes had taken refuge in the ravine, and they halted. There was a consultation among the officers, probably for the purpose of considering how to dislodge the Texans. Then the battalion was formed, and they advanced in line of battle, dragoons and lancers, with flags flying, and pennons gleaming in the sunlight, apparently a splendid body of men.

Having galloped up to within two hundred yards of the ravine, they halted, and delivered a volley with their escopetas and carbines. The balls rattled over the heads of the Texans—such of them as did not fall short—and cut the twigs above them, but none were touched, all being effectually covered under the edge of the ravine. The Mexicans fired another volley with the same result, and without eliciting any reply, and then, after some hesitation, charged boldly upon the ravine, their officers leading them on, and encouraging them with loud cries.

Captain Hays had ordered his men to reserve their fire until the enemy came within fifty yards. He waited until, as he said, he could see the twist of their mustaches, and then gave the word: "Mark the officers! Front rank, fire!"

A dozen men suddenly rose; a dozen rifle-barrels gleamed over the edge of the ravine; and their reports rung out, clear and distinct. This fire emptied several saddles, and threw the Mexicans into some disorder; but they still came on, yelling, and firing their carbines and escopetas.

'Then it was that fifteen men rose at once, and fifteen deadly tubes poured their contents into the crowded ranks of the



Mexicans. Nearly every shot told, and the dragoons, stunned and confused, huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep. Just then, the first rank, who had reloaded, fired another shattering volley, which turned the confusion into a rout. In spite of the self-sacrificing efforts of their officers, who behaved like heroes, and who were shot down while making frantic efforts to rally their men, the dragoons broke, and fled to where the lancers had been dropped behind as a reserve.

The remaining officers could then be seen harranguing their men, imploring them, and cutting at them with their swords. After great exertions, they succeeded in again forming the battalion, and again led it to the attack, recklessly exposing themselves in their endeavors to inspirit their frightened followers. The Mexicans seemed to lose all courage as they came within range of the dreaded rifles, and one volley from the ravine was sufficient to cause them to turn and gallop off.

A few more efforts were made to rally them, and a few would turn back now and then; but the officers finally abandoned the attempt, and led the battalion to the shelter of the guns of the Alamo.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### UNLOOKED FOR, BUT WELCOME.

"WHAT do you think of our little fight?" asked Captain Hays, addressing Robbins, who stood near him.

But the hardy hunter was too much absorbed in his own thoughts, which were on an entirely different subject, to heed the question, and he did not reply.

He had taken his station at the right of the line, in spite of his protest against fighting under orders, and had duly obeyed the direction to fire only at the word, but had been annoyed by the fact that the Man in Green had stationed himself at *his* right.

"However," thought the hunter, "he can't hurt me, and I may have a chance to see whether he is man or devil."

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As the Mexicans charged up toward the ravine, the Man in Green said :

"Do you see that man on the bay horse? He is a captain. The fellow on the gray is also an officer. I will take the bay, and you take the gray."

Robbins did not reply, but fired at the word, and was astonished to see that while his bullet struck only the horse of the man at whom it was aimed, the officer on the bay horse instantly fell dead. Again the Man in Green pointed out two marks, and Robbins fired with deadly effect, but the aim of his strange neighbor seemed to have been even better than his own.

"It is sart'in that his bullets are human, whatever he may be," muttered the hunter, as he reloaded.

When the Mexicans were brought to the attack the last time, and ran away before they were fairly within range, the Man in Green was absolutely frantic.

"The cowardly greasers!" he shouted. "They are running like dogs as they are! But they shall all die! They shall all die!"

With these words he leaped out of the ravine, and ran like a deer after the retreating party. Soon he stopped and fired, emptying a saddle—reloaded with the quickness of thought and continued the chase. The Mexicans, seeing but one man in pursuit, turned upon him. He waited for their approach, fired again, and sunk down, disappearing from view.

"He has been trampled to death—that is, supposin' he is a man," thought the hunter, as he saw the dragoons ride over the spot where he had been.

He was revolving this matter in his mind, not at all to his own satisfaction, when Captain Hays asked him what he thought of the fight. He was recalled to his senses by a repetition of the question.

"A right smart skrimmage, and I was sorry it was over so soon. Are any of our men hurt?"

"Not one."

"Have you missed anybody?"

"No. Have you?"

"N—n—o," drawled Robbins, ashamed to confess his thoughts concerning the man who had fought at his side.



The Texans now mounted their horses, filed out of the ravine, and marched back to their camp, leaving their dead and wounded foes to the care of the Mexicans, who would be sure to send a detail after them, as soon as the coast was clear.

Bill Robbins was destined to be still more astonished; for, when the party passed over the spot at which he had seen the Man in Green sink down and disappear, he looked in vain for the mangled corpse, and could not see even a drop of blood. He was now fully convinced that the wild marksman was not a "spirit of health," and resolved to spare no effort to save his young friend from his clutches.

Frank Coyle had none of the scruples or superstitious thoughts that troubled Robbins, and he took an opportunity, during the march, to speak privately to Captain Hays concerning the Man in Green, and to ask who and what he was.

"I am unable to tell you," answered the captain. "I know little more about him, if any thing, than you do. I know that there is no better shot—at a Mexican—and believe that he has rendered service as a spy. He comes and goes as he pleases, and his ways and actions are quite unaccountable. He is generally shunned by the men, who can not understand him, and are inclined to consider him not altogether canny. In fact, many of them believe that he is the devil himself. If so, it is a consolation to know that such a powerful person is on our side, and we hope the Lord is with us, also, I am sure."

Coyle and Robbins were well received by their compatriots in General Austin's camp, and were civilly interrogated in regard to their intentions. The old hunter expressed a willingness to fight, but wished to carry on the campaign in his own way. Coyle, whose character and abilities were well known to the General, was urged to accept a position; but he, also, declined to be under discipline for a while, intimating that it would be satisfactory to him if he could be employed on special service and allowed to make himself "generally useful." His offer was accepted, and he was told that he would be informed when his services were required.

In the evening, as Frank Coyle was strolling about the camp, he was somewhat surprised to see the Man in Green enter the General's quarters. Actuated by curiosity, he attempted to follow him, but was stopped by the sentry at the



door, who told him that the General was engaged on particular business.

He was still more surprised when, an hour or so afterward, he received a note, unsigned, requesting him to meet the writer at a place that would be pointed out to him by the bearer. He followed the boy who brought the note, and was introduced into a neat adobe house, on the outskirts of the camp, where he found himself in the presence of the mysterious individual whom he had met at the spring.

The Man in Green was no less grotesque than formerly, but he was seated at a table, in a well-furnished room, surrounded by appliances of luxury that were rare in Texas, and wore an expression of dignity that commanded Coyle's respect and increased his curiosity.

The host requested his visitor to be seated, and placed before him a decanter of wine and some glasses, inviting him to help himself.

"I am unable to drink wine," said he, "but I can assure you that what I set before you is pure and good."

Frank Coyle, quickly rejecting a suspicion that arose in his mind, helped himself from the decanter, and could not refrain from inwardly confessing that he had never tasted such wine.

The Man in Green then took from his pocket a bundle of papers, which he laid on the table, and proceeded to open his business.

"I sent for you," he said, "to resume a subject on which we have already conversed. You desire to enter the city of San Antonio de Bexar, for the purpose of obtaining an interview with the Señorita Saluda."

"That is a precise statement, and a true one. You know that I desire it, and you have promised to assist me."

"I can't exactly say that I have absolutely promised to, but I am willing to do it. Are you willing, in turn, to trust me?"

"I am. I have already said so."

"Your honest friend, Robbins, believes that I am the devil, or in league with that obnoxious personage."

"He is not the only one, perhaps; but his opinions are harmless, and are not shared by me. I could wish, however, not merely out of curiosity, to know something more about you, and particularly some of the details of your past life, for I am



convinced that you must have suffered some terrible wrong some—"

"Hold, Mr. Coyle! Let that subject be closed, for I must not be excited, if I am to assist you. My past life is a blank, and my present life is death. My secret is known but to one man now living, and his days, I think, are numbered. I can make no one my confidant, and you must never expect to know more. The question is, whether you wish to enter the city, and whether you are willing to trust to my aid."

"I do wish it, and I am willing."

"Can you speak Spanish?"

"I can speak it well—with a purer Castilian accent, I think, than most of the Mexicans."

"Let me hear you speak it a little."

A brief conversation in the Spanish language ensued, and the Man in Green expressed his satisfaction.

"The matter is easily settled," said he. "Henceforth, and for the present, you are to be Señor Jose Maria de Limontado."

"It is a long name. Does it belong to any one in particular, or is it invented for the occasion?"

"It belongs to a wealthy young Cuban, who is now a prisoner in our camp. We are obliged to detain him, as it would not be safe to allow him to enter San Antonio at present. Here are his passport and his other papers, which will inform you of his business; and for the rest you must trust to your own invention. You can borrow his name, and can leave your own in exchange, if you wish. As he is not known in the city, and as you speak Spanish so well, I can not foresee any difficulty."

"I see none, except that I am not dressed to support the character."

"That is provided for. As you wear his name, you have a right to wear his clothes, and I have a bundle of them here. The Don is sufficiently provided for, and will not miss them. I have, also, a pass from General Austin, setting forth that the bearer, Don Jose, etc., who had been arrested within our lines, is permitted to pass beyond the same, on his parole that he will give no information to the enemy. In your character as a wealthy young Cuban—by the way, are you supplied with money?"



"I have very little with me, but suppose I can procure sufficient from General Austin."

"You must allow me to be your banker; it will be more convenient. In your character of a wealthy young Cuban, I was going to say, you will have access to the best circles, and the rest depends upon yourself."

"Nothing could be plainer, and I know not how to express my gratitude for your assistance—for your unexpected and undeserved generosity."

"Don't speak of gratitude, there is work for you to do. I have good reason to believe that there is considerable dissatisfaction among the troops under General Cos, and that the place might be taken by a *coup de main*. General Austin is not prepared to believe this, upon my statement, and I wish him to receive positive evidence from some person upon whom he can rely."

"I understand you, sir, and will do my best to gain information on the subject."

"You had better sleep here to-night, so that you may get a good rest, and may read those papers and study your part. Besides, you can go to the city from here, without being noticed by your careful and suspicious friend, Robbins."

The Man in Green pressed another glass of wine upon his visitor, and then showed him into a neatly-furnished bedroom, where he bade him good-night. Frank carefully examined the papers of the young Cuban, fixing them in his memory, and inventing the story that he was to tell. He then laid down, but it was some time before he could sleep, as his thoughts were full of the grotesque and mysterious individual who had so unexpectedly and ably befriended him. The more he meditated on this subject, the more he wondered, and the more his thoughts were entangled. At last, he fixed his reflections upon the fair Señorita Saluda and the pleasure he anticipated in meeting her, and lapsed into pleasant dreams, from which he did not awake until he was summoned to rise by his host.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE BALL IN BEXAR.

FRANK COYLE dressed himself in the clothes of the Cuban—which fitted as if they had been made for him—carefully arranged his hair, and surveyed his attire with a feeling of satisfaction, if not of actual pride. He then entered the chief room of the house, where his host complimented him on his appearance, and where he found a breakfast set out, of which he partook heartily, and his host sparingly.

"There is nothing lacking now, and you will soon be on your way," said the Man in Green, as he handed him a purse of gold. "I have but one caution to give you. If you meet—and you probably will meet him—a priest called Padre Augustin, beware of him. Don't kill him—don't harm him—whatever may happen; but beware of him, as you would of a serpent! Here comes your party."

Escorted by a small detachment of Texans, under a flag of truce, Coyle soon found himself at the Mexican lines, in the outskirts of the city of Bexar. He presented his pass from General Austin, and his Cuban passport, which were duly submitted to the proper authorities. After various formalities had been gone through with, he was permitted to enter the city, and his escort returned to their camp.

The young man found Bexar to be very different from any town or city that he had yet visited, and it seemed to him more like a continuous fortification than a peaceful settlement, the one-story houses being all built of brown stone, and surmounted by parapets. In the public square was an ancient church, and several houses of more pretensions. The square was fortified with breastworks and defended by artillery, while several cannon were mounted on a platform on the roof of the church.

These were matters of special interest to Coyle, but his mind was drawn from them by the attentions of several young officers, who had taken him under their special charge and



guardianship. A Cuban gentleman of wealth and family, as the papers of Don Jose Maria de Limontado proved him to be, was an acquisition to the society of Bexar, and his new acquaintances exerted themselves to entertain him, especially a certain Captain Del Rios, to whose father, in the city of Tampico, one of the Cuban's letters was addressed.

He was shown the "lions" of the city, and was introduced, among other distinguished personages, to General Cos, who inquired the particulars of his capture, and was anxious for information concerning the numbers and intentions of the Texans. Frank excused himself from furnishing the information, on the ground that his parole expressly bound him against it, but he satisfied the General on other points. His entertainers were liberal in feasting him, and would not allow him to diminish the contents of his well-filled purse.

This was all very well and highly satisfactory; but it was not bringing him any nearer to Señorita Saluda. In vain he searched among the ladies whom he met on the streets and at the houses to which he was taken by his friends. He saw many pairs of bright black eyes, but none that seemed to him so beautiful as the flashing orbs of Maria Saluda. He did not dare to inquire concerning her, as it was understood that he was entirely unacquainted in the city, and he did not even hear her name mentioned. He was compelled, therefore, to curb his impatience and trust to fortune for his opportunity.

It was several days before the opportunity came; but it came at last, one morning when he was sitting and smoking with Captain Del Rios, in the room of the latter.

"By the way, Don Jose," said the captain, "there is to be a ball to-night, that will be worth attending. I am going, and you must accompany me, that you may see our Mexican beauties as they ought to be seen."

"By whom is it given — by any of our acquaintances?"

"Not exactly. It is to be at the house of Señora Ladega, a wealthy widow lady, who resides on the square. It is given, I believe, in honor of her niece, Señorita Saluda, who is surpassingly beautiful, as report says, though she is kept so closely that few of us have seen her as yet. I hope we will all have that pleasure to-night."



Frank's heart beat quickly at the mention of the name of his loved one, but he was careful not to exhibit any emotion.

"I would gladly accompany you," said he, "but the brigands yonder retained not only my horse and my arms, but even my wardrobe. I have nothing, except what I now wear, and it would be impossible to procure an outfit here in San Antonio."

"That need not trouble you, Don Jose. I have an acquaintance, and I doubt not that you can make yourself presentable, as we are about the same size."

"If this Señorita Saluda is so very beautiful, she will make havoc among the hearts in the garrison; but I suppose that one of you gay officers will soon carry off the prize."

"I am afraid we are already forestalled, for rumor has it that she is to marry Colonel Allende, of the Morelos dragoons."

"What manner of man is he?"

"A man who is generally disliked, and if he does secure this beautiful heiress, he will be positively hated. However, he is rich, and holds a high position, and I suppose there is no chance for us *pobres diabolos*."

"While there is life there is hope. Has the señorita no choice?"

"It is understood that she is under the control of the priests. She arrived here in charge of one priest, who lately ran his head against an unlucky American bullet, and now she is said to be managed by another, a disagreeable fellow, called Fray Augustin. It seems to me, Don Jose, that you take a peculiar interest in this young lady and her affairs."

"I am interested in all young ladies, especially if they are beautiful and wealthy. Do not be faint-hearted, Señor Capitano. We will call this colonel out and shoot him, and then we will have a fair race for the prize. That reminds me that I must purchase some weapons, if any are to be had in Bexar."

So it happened that Captain Del Rios and his Cuban friend found themselves, that evening (for the fashionables of Bexar kept good hours), in the public square, in front of the residence of Señora Ladega. It was a large, two-story stone house, and had a gloomy appearance, as it was almost destitute of ornament; but it was brilliantly illuminated, and a band on the balcony played Mexican airs in a very creditable style.

Frank Coyle felt his heart flutter, as he entered the house,



and was introduced into a large room, which Americans would call the parlor. It was richly furnished, highly ornamented, well lighted with wax candles, and filled with a brilliant throng of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were many officers of the Mexican army.

There was a slight cessation of the hum of conversation, when the names of Capitano Pedro del Rios and Señor Jose Maria de Limontado were announced, and many eyes were turned upon them; but they bore the scrutiny bravely, and followed the lead of the major-domo toward the upper end of the room, where Señora Ladega and her niece were enthroned in state for the reception of their guests. Frank was dressed well, and looked, as he was, every inch a gentleman. He walked as proudly as a prince—in fact, he felt that he was a sovereign in the land of his birth.

He soon saw Maria Saluda, richly attired, resplendent in jewels, and beautiful as the queen of the night, seated by her aunt, a withered old woman with a kindly countenance. Near them stood a beetle-browed, heavy-jawed, powerfully-built man, in the garb of a priest, for whom Frank felt an instinctive dislike, and of whom he instantly had his suspicions.

The young men were introduced by the major-domo, and bowed low as the ladies rose to receive them. When Frank raised his eyes, they met those of Maria, who started, turned pale, and then blushed, and fixed her gaze upon Captain Del Rios.

The captain felt highly flattered, conceiving that these demonstrations were entirely for his benefit, and loosened his tongue in a strain of fulsome compliment peculiar to Mexican gallants. The young lady bowed and smiled, and the young men stepped aside to make room for others.

"I really believe, Don Jose," said Del Rios, "that one of us has made an impression upon the fair señorita, and you will pardon me for saying that I do not think it is you."

"Of course it is not, *amigo*. Her glances and her smiles were all directed toward you, and you alone did the talking. I wish you joy of your success, if such it proves to be."

"You were right in telling me that I should not be faint hearted and that there is hope while life lasts. *Valgame Dios!*



how beautiful she is ; had I better call out Colonel Allende, or wait for him to call me out ?”

“ I think that you are not sure of your bird until it is in your hand, and that you had better consider the matter before you challenge your superior officer. By the way, can you point out to me this Colonel Allende ?”

“ I will do so, as soon as I see him. Ah ! there is the scoundrel, leading out the señorita to the dance.”

It was even so. The reception was over, and the principal amusement of the night had commenced, and Colonel Allende had claimed the hand of Maria Saluda. He was a well-shaped man, was dressed in a gaudy uniform, and might have been called handsome, had it not been for the fact that his eyes were too small and too close together, and that his countenance had a hard and malicious expression. Frank Coyle at once marked him for an enemy, and wondered, but only for a moment, whether Maria could have encouraged his suit.

As he watched the couple, he was convinced that she had no pleasure in dancing with Allende, and he amused himself with listening to Del Rios, who was fretting and cursing his stupidity in not having been beforehand with the colonel.

Frank waited a long time for an opportunity of speaking to the lady of his love, and his patience was at last rewarded, near the close of the entertainment. She was standing by an open window, looking out into the night, as if to enjoy the coolness of the air after the heat of the dance. Frank quietly approached her and stood by her side.

“ *Maria mia,*” said he, “ did you recognize me ?”

“ Yes, Francisco—Frank, I mean,” she answered, with a startled look. “ I knew you, and you frightened me. Why are you here, in the midst of enemies, and in danger ? You are too rash. I tremble for you every moment, and I hardly dare to speak to you.”

“ I am in no danger ; I am known and acknowledged here as Señor Jose de Limontado, a Cuban gentleman, and I am entirely safe ; there is no one to suspect me. The priest who was traveling with you is dead, I understand.”

“ He is.”

“ And the ugly old duenna—what of her ?”



"My aunt sent her away, because she could not agree with her.

"Then there is not a person in Bexar who could recognize me, and there is no danger of discovery. I would encounter any peril to be with you, if only for a little while; but I am happy to say that I consider myself safe."

"But there might be some one else—some one might come—"

"Forget such idle fears, and let us speak of realities. Do you still love me, *Maria mia*?"

"How can you ask me? You know that I do. Do not make me repeat it here."

"It is said that you are to marry Colonel Allende. Is the report true?"

"They wish me to marry him, but I had rather die. I will never be his bride of my own will, but I know not what they may force me to do. I speak favorably to him, to please them, but I hate the gilded serpent."

"They can not force you to do any thing. But who do you mean by 'them'?"

"Are you speaking of the beauty of the night, my children?" asked the beetle-browed priest, bearing down upon them like some piratical craft upon an innocent merchantman.

"I was telling Señorita Saluda," said Frank, who thought it best to open his batteries upon the pirate at once, "about a strange creature in the shape of a man, that I saw in the camp of the American brigands. He was dressed entirely in green, and his face was nearly as green as his clothes."

The priest uttered a shrill exclamation, threw up his hands and sunk into a chair, his stout frame trembling like a leaf.

"*This* is the Padre Augustin," thought Frank.

"What is the matter, Fra Augustin?" said several voices, and there was a general rush toward the chair in which the priest was seated.

"A sort of vertigo," he gasped—"a—a sudden dizziness; the heat of the room overpowers me. Give me air."

"He was led to a window, where he soon recovered his composure, but he left the room and was not again seen.

Frank had no other opportunity of speaking to Maria alone; the guests soon left, and the entertainment was at an end.



## CHAPTER VI.

## A CHAPTER OF INCIDENTS.

THE day after the party at Señora Ladega's was productive of several small adventures to Frank Coyle.

In the first place, his friend Del Rios taxed him with having been, in some way, the cause of the sudden sickness of the Padre Augustin."

"There is a mystery about that transaction," said the captain, "and I would like to get at the bottom of it. I am curious to know what you said to the disagreeable priest that caused him to act so strangely."

"Do you suppose it could have been any thing that I said? He asked what the Señorita and I were talking about, and I told him, though I considered it an impertinent question. He said it was the heat of the room that caused his faintness."

"That is sheer nonsense, Don Jose. He is not a man to be affected by so slight a cause, and the heat of the room had not troubled him to that moment."

"I noticed that he recovered as soon as he was taken to the fresh air."

"That is true; but it must have been something more than the heat that could disturb a man like him. I believe he could survive in Tophet. What did you tell him you had been saying to the Señorita?"

"We had been conversing about my captivity in the American camp, I said, and I told him, I believe, that I had been describing to her a strange creature in the shape of a man, that I had seen there."

"What sort of a creature?"

"It was not a matter of the least importance. I spoke of a grotesque person who was dressed entirely in green, and whose face was nearly as green as his dress."

"There is nothing amazing or alarming about that, and I do not see how it can have affected the padre, unless he happens



to have an antipathy to that particular color ; I hope you have not offended the disagreeable ecclesiastic, as he has the will and the power to make himself troublesome."

"He must know that I could not have intended any offense, as I was entirely unacquainted with him."

"He surely ought to understand it so. By the way, Don Jose, you enjoyed quite a *tête-a-tête* with the charming señorita, a privilege that was not accorded to the rest of us I am inclined to be jealous of you, and I observed Colonel Allende throwing some very dark glances at you."

"A cat may look at a king, captain, and I may be excused for taking advantage of a favorable opportunity to speak to such a fair lady. I happened to be near her when she was alone and disengaged, and you must attribute the *tête-a-tête* to my good fortune, not to my enterprise. As for Colonel Allende's black glances, I think none of them hit me, however well they may have been aimed. If they did I did not feel them ; I am not under his orders, and have no fear of his displeasure. I claim to be a pretty good judge of woman nature, as well as of human nature, Del Rios, and it is my impression that Señorita Saluda has no affection for that dark-browed colonel, and that he suspects as much. I do not see why your chance may not be as good as his."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Don Jose, for you confirm my own opinion. I think I have had some encouragement, and I am willing to stay in Bexar now, though I wished, a few days ago, that the Texans would drive us out of the city. I wonder why they have not done so before this."

"What do you mean, captain ? Do you think they could have taken the city ?"

"I have no doubt of it. Enterprise and dash would have given it to them without great loss of life, and they might take it now by a *coup de main*, if their force has not been too much weakened."

"You surprise me ; Bexar is too well fortified."

"The artillery is its real strength. The truth is, Don Jose, that there are many of us who are not fond of fighting in this cause. We have no love for General Santa Anna, and do not desire to sustain his despotism. He was elected as Constitutional President, but he has falsified his oath, and has



overthrown the Constitution of 1824, under which he received his authority. He has created himself a dictator, and recognizes no law but his own will. Those Texan people are fighting for their rights under the Federal Constitution, and, for my part, I would be glad to see the usurper defeated."

"Is this feeling widespread, or is it confined to a few of the thinking men?"

"It is shared in by many, both rank and file, and affects, I have no doubt, fully half the garrison. If we should be attacked, a large portion of us would make a show of fight, for our own honor, but we would evacuate as soon as our officers would permit."

Captain Del Rios went out to attend to his military duties, and Frank Coyle made a few memoranda, intending to seek an opportunity of conveying some information to the Texan camp. He had hardly finished this occupation, when an unexpected visitor was announced—no less a personage than Padre Augustin.

The beetle-browed priest was excessively polite, said that he was proud to meet such a distinguished and influential young foreigner, and asked a multitude of questions, all of which Frank answered, or evaded, as well as he could.

"Were you pleased with the party at Señora Ladega's?" asked Padre Augustin, at last.

"I was highly pleased, and deemed myself fortunate in being permitted to be present. I was quite dazzled by the beauty of the ladies, particularly of Señorita Saluda. I would not have believed that so many fair women could be found in Bexar, at a time, too, when the city is in a state of siege."

"Señorita Saluda is considered very beautiful," said the priest, contracting his brows, "and she is wealthy. Her destined husband, Colonel Allende, may well be proud of the prize he has won."

"I hope he is worthy of her."

"I can assure you that he is. He is a true son of the Church."

"I presume, then, that the marriage will not be displeasing to the Church."

"The Church seeks no benefit for itself, Señor Limontado though it desires its daughters to be united only to its sons."



Being an orphan, Señorita Saluda is, in a manner, under the guardianship of the Church. I am glad that you were pleased with the entertainment, for we desire strangers to know that Mexico is not so far behind the world in civilization as some suppose. I was overcome by fatigue and by the heat last night to such an extent that I was quite unwell."

"I noticed that you seemed faint."

"That reminds me, Señor Limontado, of a circumstance that you were relating when I was seized with the vertigo. You were speaking of a strange creature that you had met in the camp of the Texan brigands. If I remember rightly, you said that he had a fancy for dressing in green. I have always taken an interest in odd and grotesque beings, and would like, if you will favor me, to hear something more about this person."

"There is really nothing more to tell. I merely mentioned that I had seen such a creature, and I supposed it to be a man, though there were some who doubted it."

"Was there no other peculiarity about him? I think you said that his face seemed nearly as green as his dress."

"It certainly did have a greenish tinge, but that may have been a reflection from his clothes."

"What did he appear to be doing in the camp of the Texans?"

"I am not aware that he had any occupation. He was simply moving about, without any special occupation, as far as I could see."

"A squadron of our cavalry was sent out, a few days ago, to attack a detachment of Texans, and they were repulsed at a ravine. While they were retreating they were pursued by one man, who was dressed as you describe this person to have been, and who fired upon them with deadly aim. Some of the cavalry turned upon him, and he sunk down on the ground, and when they reached the spot where he was last seen, he had disappeared, leaving not a trace. It was a very strange affair, and I have thought that that mysterious person might be the same one of whom you were speaking."

"It is very likely. I have understood that his chief passion was a profound hatred of Mexicans—and priests."

Padre Augustin shuddered, and turned pale.



"He must be a very unprincipled man," said the priest. "Was it supposed that he was a rational being? Was he considered sane?"

"I am not able to tell you, as I saw him but twice. Those who saw more of him, and who ought to be better qualified to judge, were inclined to doubt whether he really was a man."

"Was it thought possible that he might be a—spirit—a being from another world?"

"Something like it. I believe that such superstitious notions were prevalent among the men."

"Do you believe, señor," earnestly asked the priest, "that the souls of the departed are ever permitted to revisit the earth, and to take part in the affairs of living men?"

"I have never known such an instance, and I am not inclined to believe what I have not experienced."

"There have been well authenticated accounts of such apparitions, and some have been vouched for by persons high in authority in the Church. Suppose a man had been foully wronged, and had been murdered, do you suppose he could rise from his grave for vengeance?"

"Such questions are too deep for me, holy father, and I leave them to the decision of the Church."

"You are right, my son," said Padre Augustin, suddenly rising. "You are perfectly right, and I commend your discretion. I must now leave you, thanking you for your information. Are you acquainted with Colonel Allende? If not, I will be happy to introduce you."

"I do not know him, but will probably meet him in the course of my rambles."

You will find him an honorable man as well as a gallant officer. He is a gentleman of whom I have a very high opinion, and I shall be happy to see him united to Señorita Salada. Some envious tongues have circulated the report that she will refuse to marry him, but the report is false, and the marriage will take place within a short time. *Buenos días*, Señor Limontado. I shall be pleased to see you, if you will do me the honor to call at my humble residence."

Frank bowed out his clerical visitor, lighted a cigar, and sat down to meditate.



"That is a sly old fox," he thought, "and I don't wonder that my friend in green warned me against him. I hit him hard last night, though I am unable to tell what made the blow hurt, and he is welcome to all the information he got out of me to-day. He and his pig-eyed Colonel Allende may plot as they please, but they shall never keep possession of Maria while I am alive and able to prevent it. But, I am neglecting my duty, and must make up for lost time. I must contrive to get a letter carried to the American camp, if I have to take it myself. If Bill Robbins had not been too officious and too fearful, I might have explained my plans to him, and might have made him very useful."

The young man would have meditated on this subject for some time longer, if his cigar had not gone out, and if another visitor had not been announced.

The new arrival was shown in, and he bowed very low as he entered the room. It needed but a glance to assure Frank that he was a Jew—a Mexican Jew! The young man was surprised, for he had never before heard of such an animal as a Mexican Jew.

This particular Jew was like the rest of his class, except that he had very long gray hair and beard and a very brown face, and wore a very long serge coat and a very broad hat. As he bowed, he handed Frank a paper, which the young man took, and politely requested his visitor to be seated.

The note was neatly folded, delicately written, and perfumed, and contained only these words:

"If you will follow the bearer, he will conduct you to where you can see—  
MARIA SALUDA."

Frank looked at the Jew, but there was nothing to be learned from the old man's impassive countenance. The handwriting of the note was Maria's, and he was sure that he could not be deceived in that. Deception or no deception, he resolved to venture, and to trust to his own skill and courage for extrication from any possible peril.

"What is your name, my friend?" he asked the Jew.

"You may call me Isaac, as that is the name by which I am generally known," was the answer, in broken Spanish, which we will not endeavor to reproduce upon paper.

"You have not the appearance of a messenger of Cupid.



Isaac ; but I will follow you, as I suppose you have had your directions. . . Lead on."

The old man bowed, and led the way into the street, followed by Frank, who had first carefully concealed the note, and seen that his pistols were in order

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## CHAPTER VII.

### SURPRISES.

FRANK followed the Jew up a cross-street, and then turned to the left, into one of the back streets, in which he walked until he judged that he was nearly opposite the public square. His guide stopped in front of a gloomy and unpretending house, with a very narrow entrance.

"This is the place, señor," said he. "I will knock at the door, and you may enter, after which I must leave you."

"This is not Señora Ladega's house," said Frank. "Are you sure that this is the place at which I was to meet the lady from whom you brought the note?"

"This is the place, señor. Enter boldly, and have no fear."

Frank hesitated. The strange messenger, and the strange place to which he had been brought, were calculated to cause a feeling of distrust, and he felt distrustful. Perhaps Colonel Allende suspected that he was a rival, and had formed a plan to get rid of him. Perhaps the wily Padre Augustin wished to entrap him for some purpose of his own. But the handwriting of the note *was* Maria's, and that was enough. He determined to go through with the adventure, happen what might.

"I am not in the habit of feeling fear, old man," said he. "I am ready to enter."

The Jew gave a peculiar rap at the door, and it opened instantly, closing behind the young man as soon as he was within the house.

Frank found himself in a dark and narrow hall, and was



at a loss whether to go further or remain where he was, when a light gleamed from the head of a flight of stairs in front of him. He went up the stairs, and saw that the light came through a door that was ajar. He pushed open the door, and found himself in a small but neatly-furnished room. The blinds of the windows were tightly closed, and the room was lighted by a candle.

"Very neat, very comfortable, and very mysterious," thought Frank Coyle; "but there is no lady here."

He happened to cast his eyes down upon the table that was in the middle of the room, and saw lying upon it a strip of paper, on which these words were written in large characters:

*"Have faith and patience."*

"Very good advice," he muttered, "especially the direction about patience, which seems to be needed here. I wonder what is to come next."

His question was soon answered. A portion of the paneled wall swung open like a door, and through the opening stepped Maria Saluda, beautiful, bright-eyed and smiling.

"I see that you have come, Frank," said she, as she gave him her hand. "I am glad to know that you have faith whether you have patience or not."

"I always have faith in you, dearest; but I must admit that I was somewhat suspicious of my guide and of this place. Please tell me where we are, for I am somewhat bewildered. Surely this is not your aunt's house."

"But it adjoins her house, and you see that I am not straying far from home. That opening in the wall was made for me by a good friend of mine, and I have often met him here."

*"Him! Who is he, Maria?"*

"I can not tell you now; but he is a very kind and true friend. It ought to be sufficient for you that I am here to day. I could not meet you at my aunt's, because she and Padre Augustin guard me closely, and will not permit me to see any one but that hateful Colonel Allende."

We will not attempt to describe the interview between the lovers, although it was long and interesting—to them. Maria explained that her proposed union with Colonel Allende was a



plan of Padre Augustin's alone, in whose hands Señora Ladega was a well-meaning and submissive tool. The priest expected to secure a portion of her fortune for "the Church," and also to receive from Allende a handsome bonus for the benefit of the same greedy institution. This was all well understood by her she said; she did not intend to throw away either herself or her property, and she thought that she was prepared for all emergencies, although she admitted that the Jesuitical priest was a dangerous enemy, and that there was no foretelling what steps he might take in the face of an open and decided opposition.

Frank urged her to fly with him, and to escape to the Texan camp, where there would be neither Mexican priests nor Mexican colonels to molest them; but she denounced the proposition as impracticable and impolitic, if not absolutely wrong, and finally convinced the young man that there was too much risk in attempting to pass the lines, as discovery would be the destruction of their hopes.

The interview was at last brought to a close, Maria promising to make arrangements for another meeting as soon as possible, and Frank, following her directions, went down stairs, opened the door, which was closed with a spring lock, and passed out into the street, full of joy and hope.

He had not gone far, when he was accosted by an officer, whom he recognized as Colonel Allende.

"I believe that I have the honor of addressing Señor de Limontado," said the officer.

"And I speak to Colonel Allende."

"You are right. I perceive that you have been visiting old Isaac, the Jew."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Frank, who was not aware that he had been visiting any such person. "Is it the custom of Bexar to watch strangers when they ramble about the city, or is it a duty enjoined upon the officers of the army during the present siege?"

"It is neither," answered Allende, who was evidently cut by the sarcasm. "I saw you come out of Isaac's house, and I thought it hardly possible that a wealthy Cuban gentleman, such as you are supposed to be, could be compelled to borrow from a money-lender."



"Perhaps I am, and perhaps I am not. Is that a matter which concerns the military?"

"Perhaps it does, and perhaps it does not. I only wished to say to you that there are some commodities in which it is not safe to deal."

"I am not a trader, sir."

"You may be a speculator, for there are many kinds of speculation. I warn you that there are some commodities in which it is dangerous to speculate; for instance, such a commodity as *Señorita Saluda*."

"I respect that lady too highly to consider her a commodity."

"However you may consider her, it is not safe for you to speculate in that quarter, and I am giving you timely advice."

"Without pretending to know what you mean, but simply regarding your warning as a piece of impertinence, I wish to inform you that I shall speculate as I please, when I please, and where I please, without noticing your threats or insinuations. Your advice is not needed, and will not be heeded."

"You have my warning, sir," said Allende.

"And you have my answer," contemptuously replied Frank, turning on his heel and walking away.

When he arrived at the apartments of Del Rios, he found the captain in a high state of excitement.

"In the name of all the saints," exclaimed the officer, "where have you been? I have waited for you these many hours, and have feared that you had been kidnapped, waylaid, assassinated, arrested, drowned, or any thing else that is horrible and unpleasant. Here you come, alive and well, and I suppose you are ready to laugh at my solicitude."

"I believe it might have been spared," answered Frank; "but I am none the less obliged to you. I have been rambling about the city, and the only adventure of note that I have met with was an encounter with Colonel Allende. I verily believe that he suspects me of having designs upon the affections of *Señorita Saluda*, for he gave me to understand that she was not to be interfered with."

"The pig-eyed coxcomb is jealous, and it will be necessary to call him out and shoot him. Did you quarrel with him?"



"There was no quarrel. I told him that he was impertinent, and he gave me what he called a warning."

"I have no doubt that he meant what he said, and you had better be on your guard, Don Jose. We will now have our supper, after which we will light our cigars and take a stroll. I want to show you one celebrity of Bexar that you have not seen—the gaming-house."

After supper, the two young men sallied out, as Del Rois had proposed, and finally entered a handsome house on the principal street. They were ushered into a large, richly-furnished, and brilliantly-lighted room, where several "green-cloth" tables were set out, all covered with cards and piles of gold and silver, and surrounded by groups of gamblers. The room was crowded, and a continual buzz of conversation was kept up; but the gamblers, absorbed in their occupation, seldom spoke, and the play went on, and the piles of gold and silver changed hands, with what seemed to an outsider a monotonous sameness. Ladies were there, who bet as freely as the men, and several priests were in the throng, among whom Coyle was surprised to see the beetle-browed Padre Augustin, who was seated at one of the principal tables, and appeared to be betting high.

"Is it necessary to play?" asked Frank.

"You may do as you please. I believe I will stake a few dollars, for amusement."

"I can find more amusement in looking on."

Captain Del Rios had hardly taken his seat when a soldier entered with orders for him, and he left the saloon, after excusing himself to Frank, who then turned his attention to Padre Augustin.

The priest was playing heavily, and was evidently winning, to judge from the savage joy that shone in his eyes, and the malicious glances that he sent, now and then, at his antagonist, a pale young man, of gentlemanly appearance. They were betting against each other, on the cards turned by the dealer.

In a short time, having staked and lost his last dollar, the young man arose with a sigh, and left the room. His place was immediately taken by another, in whom Frank Coyle recognized the old Jew who had been his guide that day.



"Will you continue the play?" asked Isaac.

The priest nodded assent, and the game went on as before, but with this difference—that the priest was continually a loser, and his antagonist was a winner.

Having lost several heavy stakes, Padre Augustin became indignant and quite reckless. He insisted on doubling his bet, to which the Jew assented, and the padre lost. Again and again he doubled, and again and again he was a loser. At last, he staked all the gold and silver he had left, in the desperate hope that his luck would change; but fortune, or something else, was against him, and the Jew raked down his final stake.

"You must be in league with the devil," angrily muttered the priest, as he rose from the table.

"I hope I am not," meekly replied Isaac. "Your worship seems to be so unlucky at the green cloth that I should think you would dislike the color."

The padre's face was as red as fire as he turned furiously upon his late antagonist, and he seemed on the point of replying, but he thought better of it, and walked away. The Jew gathered up his earnings, and left the room. As he did so, he touched Frank on the arm, and whispered to him to follow.

The young man sauntered out of the house, and joined Isaac in the street. The latter led the way through several streets and down a dark alley, opened a door in an old house, and requested Frank to enter, preceding him up-stairs to a dingy room, which was scantily furnished with an iron box, a table, and a few chairs. One of the chairs he offered to Frank, and then, sitting down, laid on the table a bag containing the gold and silver that he had brought from the gaming saloon, and proceeded to sort the coin into piles.

"Your winnings seem to have been pretty large to-night," said Frank.

"They are not my winnings, but another man's losses."

"You must have a scientific knowledge of games of chance, for you played with wonderful judgment."

"I always win when I play with Satan or any of his agents. That priest will have to make sure of a good slice of *Señorita Saluda's* property, or he will be unable to pay his debts."



"When you speak of Señorita Saluda, I am reminded that I owe you my thanks for your aid in the interview I had with her to-day. If I could reward you, I would gladly do so."

"I have been rewarded, señor."

"If you will pardon my curiosity, old man, I would like to ask you how many houses you occupy in this city?"

"Only one, señor."

"Was it not your house at which I met the señorita?"

"It was."

"Is not this also your house?"

"It is."

"And yet you have but one."

"The two houses are one and the same, señor."

"I would not have suspected it, as we have come by a different route to-night, and the house seems strange to me. Where, if I may ask, is the room in which I had the pleasure of meeting Señorita Saluda?"

The Jew unlocked a side-door, and showed Frank a well-furnished room, the same into which he had been introduced in the daytime.

"Are you satisfied, señor?" asked Isaac.

"I am. Can I see the señorita now?"

"Not now, it is too late, and she has given me no instructions."

The Jew closed and locked the door, and again seated himself at the table.

"Have you any thing for the friends you left in the other camp?" said he.

"What do you mean? What do you take me for?"

"Have you any word to send, any letter, any news of any kind?"

"Please explain your meaning."

"Ah! you can not trust me, even after what you have seen. Perhaps this will remove your doubts."

He handed Frank a scrap of paper, on which these words were written, in green ink:

"Mr. Coyle may trust old Isaac, the Jew, as he would trust me."

There was no signature to the paper, but Frank well knew



from whom it came, as his real name was there, and the writing was in green ink.

"I am satisfied," said he. "Do you know any thing of the writer of this?"

"I know nothing but my instructions. Have you any thing to send?"

"I have," answered Frank, giving him the paper that he had written in Captain Del Rios' room.

"It shall be delivered," said the old man. "Do you wish to borrow any money?"

"I have no need of any at present."

"Are you sure?"

"I am sure."

"If you need any, I beg that you will come to me. I will now bid you *buenos noches*, as your friend will be expecting you. He is a good young man, although he is a Mexican, and if he wishes money he may come to old Isaac."

Without any more words, the old man showed his visitor out of the house, and Frank, in a wondering mood, walked to his room, where he found Del Rios, sitting over a bottle of wine and fretting at his protracted absence.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### ROBBINS IN TROUBLE.

ABOUT this time it happened that honest Bill Robbins got himself into trouble.

The hunter had missed his young friend from the camp, shortly after Frank had safely arrived in Bexar. He sought for him, high and low, but was unable to find him. He made inquiries on all sides; but no one had seen him; no one knew any thing about him. He laid the matter before the General, but that officer gave him no satisfaction. Robbins could only conclude that Frank had desperately ventured into the city, in search of the bewitching beauty with black eyes, or that he had been spirited away by the Man in Green. Perhaps both suppositions were true, for the green monster could carry Frank



before him on his broomstick, as well as he could ride on it himself.

Having thus settled the matter in his own mind, Robbins thought it best to find the Man in Green, and compel him to bring back his young friend, or disclose what he had done with him. In this search, also, he was at fault, for that mysterious personage had likewise disappeared, and Robbins was neither able to see him nor hear of him. Those of whom he inquired concerning him declared that they had not seen him, and did not wish to see him. This double disappearance, simultaneous as it seemed, convinced the old hunter that his suppositions were true, that Frank Coyle had been spirited away by the Man in Green, probably at night time, and on a broomstick, and that he would be given over, if he had not been already, to the power of the evil one, who was represented on earth by the mysterious person in green.

Having waited several days in the hope that the young gentleman might return and give an account of himself, Robbins concluded that it was his duty to go in search of him, and to rescue him, if possible, whether he was in the hands of the Mexicans or of a worse enemy. • He knew that Bexar was the place to which Frank's inclinations would lead him, and thither he determined to go. He was strengthened in this resolve by hearing a report that the Man in Green had been in the camp; that he had been seen to enter General Burleson's quarters (Austin having left the army, and Burleson having succeeded him,) and that he had gone, when he left the camp, in the direction of Bexar.

The old man chose the night time for his enterprise. He collected an assortment of ragged clothes, which he put on in place of his hunter's garb, slung a bag of food at his side, concealed his hunting-knife under his rags, took a staff in his hand, and set out. The night was extremely dark, and he did not find it very difficult, by availing himself of the cover of several scattered houses, and by crawling and working himself along in woodsman's fashion, to pass the pickets and the inner line of sentries. When he was fairly within the limits of the city, he laid down in an outhouse, and slept soundly until dawn, when he ate some of the food in his bag, and started out to commence his search.



Although Robbins had reluctantly admitted to Frank Coyle that he had "kinder" been in Bexar "once," he was, in fact, pretty well acquainted with the place. He knew the character of all the streets and the location of the public square, and he thought he could give a pretty good guess at the house which the Man in Green had spoken of as occupied by Señora Ladega. The great difficulty with him was that he knew very little Spanish, and that little he spoke with a very un-Mexican accent. For this reason he had been induced to act the part of a beggar, as he had picked up several snatches of beggars' slang, and could mouth the inevitable "*por el amor de Dios un poco dinero*," as well as the dirtiest of them.

With this phrase as his stock in trade, and with his staff in his hand, he traversed the principal thoroughfares, every now and then holding out his ragged hat to the passers-by, with his monotonous drawl, "*por el amor de Dios*." A few gave him some small coins, and more passed him by with abuse, but curses and coppers were equally indifferent to Bill Robbins, who kept his keen eyes on the stretch, scanning every person he met, in the hope of lighting upon the object of his search.

He went to the public square but found it impossible to pass within the fortifications, and was obliged to reconnoiter from the outside. He soon settled in his own mind which house was Señora Ladega's, and was satisfied, from an expression that was dropped by a bystander, that his opinion was correct.

The next question was, how to get into the house and see Señorita Saluda. As no person was allowed to pass inside of the fortifications, he concluded that there must be a back entrance, which he must find; accordingly, having fixed in his memory the position of the building, he went, by a circuitous route, to the street which he supposed to be in its rear, and walked up until he was sure that he had reached the house.

The blinds were closed and there was no sign of life about the habitation. Robbins would have knocked at the door, and would have endeavored, by some hook or crook, to obtain an interview with the lady of Frank's love, if he had not known that his ignorance of the language would immediately



betray him, and subject him to arrest. If he could only see the señorita, and speak to her, without attracting the attention of any one else, he thought he would be satisfied.

With this object in view, he resumed his walk, returning and passing the house at intervals of about half an hour, for he did not dare to remain in the vicinity and watch the door, and his only hope was that he might see the señorita as she left, or might meet her on the street. In this he was doomed to disappointment, for he saw the door open but once, and then there came out a broad-shouldered and heavy-featured man in the garb of a priest, who walked rapidly down the street.

But the honest hunter's patience was destined to be rewarded. The hour of noon had passed, and he was growing tired of his hopeless trudging about, when, as he again passed the house, looking up at the darkened windows, he saw a blind on the lower floor opened by a white and delicate hand, and through the opening peeped a pair of the blackest eyes in the world, which Bill Robbins immediately recognized as those of Maria Saluda.

Off came his hat, and he held it up to the window, with his supplicating drawl, "*por el amor de Dios.*" As the young lady reached out her hand, and dropped a coin into the hat, Robbins spoke to her.

"Señorita, let me say a word to you," he eagerly exclaimed, speaking in English. "I want to say a word to you. Have you seen Master Frank Coyle? Do you know whar' he is?"

"What do you mean? Who are you?" returned Maria, drawing back with a startled air.

"Don't be scared, miss. I ain't a beggar, but a true American, and my name is Bill Robbins. I'm a friend to Master Frank, as I was to his father afore him, and I want to find him, 'cause I'm afeard he has been spirited away by an outlandish sort of a chap that he took a notion to. If you know any thin' about him, miss, you'll do me a power of good by tellin' me."

"Speak lower," said Maria, slightly smiling. "Your friend is safe and well, more safe than you are while you remain here. You can be of no service to him, but may do him much harm. If you belong in the American camp, hasten to



return to it, for you will only bring trouble upon yourself and your friend by staying in Bexar."

"Can you tell me whar' he is?" persisted Robbins.

"I can not. I do not know."

The hunter would have questioned her further, but he was interrupted by the priest whom he had seen leaving the house, who now came striding up to the door.

"What does this mean?" he asked, in a harsh voice. "Is it becoming in you, Señorita Saluda, to be conversing at the window with a common street-beggar?"

The blind was hastily closed, and Robbins held out his hat to the new-comer, with his invariable appeal, "*por el amor de Dios.*"

"Get away, fellow!" said the priest, as he pushed him aside, and entered the house.

Although Robbins was glad to learn that his young friend was alive and well, he was not satisfied, for his object was to see him, and get him out of Bexar. He retired to an obscure corner, where he appeased his hunger, and then recommenced his search.

Retracing his way to the principal street, he again walked up toward the public square, holding out his ragged hat, and asking alms of the passers-by. He had not gone far when he caught sight of the very man for whom he was looking, a short distance beyond him, on the other side of the way. He was sure that he was not mistaken, for the change in dress could not prevent him from recognizing the familiar features of Frank Coyle.

"Master Frank! Stop, Master Frank!" he shouted, hardly conscious of what he was doing, in his eagerness to meet his friend. As Frank, who was walking rapidly, turned into a side street, Robbins started and ran after him at full speed. He was so eager and excited, that he did not look where he was going, and the consequence was that he ran into a corporal's guard of Mexican soldiers who were coming down the street toward him, by whom he was collared and roughly treated.

It was soon discovered that he did not understand Spanish, and that he was not a Mexican, and the natural inference was that he was an American and a spy. Accordingly, the guard



conducted him to the head-quarters of the commander of their corps for examination.

That officer happened to be Colonel Allende, who, as soon as the prisoner was announced as an American spy, determined in his own mind what disposition should be made of the case, so far as he was concerned.

Captain Del Rios, who happened to be present, and who spoke English, was requested to act as interpreter. The prisoner, being asked his name and nationality, replied that his name was William Robbins, and that he was a native and citizen of the United States. He denied that he belonged to the Texan army, and refused to state what his business was in Bexar. A soldier was found, who swore, whether truthfully or not, that he had been a prisoner in the Texan camp, from which he had made his escape, and that he had seen Robbins there, armed and marching around with the rest. Others stated that they had seen him begging in the streets of Bexar. The prisoner was urged to confess, and thus make his punishment lighter; but he said that he had nothing to confess, having done nothing wrong, and the examination was brought to a close.

"It is very plain," said Colonel Allende, speaking through the interpreter, "that you are a spy, and liable to be punished as such, for you are an American, and you are going about the city in disguise; but we are disposed to be merciful, and I now offer to treat you as a prisoner of war, if you will disclose to us the number of the Texans and their intentions as far as you know them, and if you will tell us whether desertions continue, and whether reinforcements are expected by them. If you do not consent to this, you must meet the fate of a spy.

"I hain't got nothin' to tell about any of those things," answered honest Bill Robbins. "If you want to know how many they are, just go out and fight 'em in the open field, and you will soon find out. If you want to know their plan, I am free to say that they mean to take this town."

"That is not satisfactory, prisoner. Unless you give us the information I ask, you must be shot."

"As for betrayin' my friends," stubbornly replied the hunter, "it is somethin' you can't get this child to do, and thar's no use in talkin' about it."



Colonel Allende made some memoranda of the case, which he gave to the officer of the guard, directing him to take the prisoner to General Cos to receive his sentence. Bill Robbins was bound and led away, and the colonel followed him to make sure that the matter was laid before the General in the light in which he chose to view it.

After General Cos had glanced over the testimony, and had heard the statement of Colonel Allende, the prisoner was again asked, through the interpretation of Captain Del Rios, whether he was willing to confess and give the information, and his reply was similar to that which he had given to Colonel Allende.

"Let him be shot at daybreak to-morrow," was the laconic order of the General, who motioned to the guard to take him away, and resumed the business on which he had been engaged. Bill Robbins was immediately led to prison, where he was thrust into a cell by himself.

"What a confounded fool I have been!" was the first reflection of the hunter, when he found himself locked up, with no prospect before him but that of dying at sunrise. "If I had only taken the advice of the black-eyed beauty, how much better off I would have been! I ought to have been satisfied with havin' got so far in safety, without rushin' on for nothin', and buttin' my head ag'inst a stone wall worse than Master Frank himself. She told me that I would get into trouble unless I went back, and now I find myself here, as tight as a wolf in a trap, with the promise of bein' shot in the mornin', and nobody to blame but my stupid self. 'The Texas boys will lose one good rifle, Master Frank will lose a true and blundering old friend, and I— well, I will lose the most, I suppose, as I will lose my life, which is about all I have in this world."

He continued to soliloquize in this gloomy fashion, until his supper was brought in, when he made a scanty meal, and proceeded to examine his cell, to see whether there was any chance for escape. He soon satisfied himself on this point, for the walls were of stone, the small window was stoutly barred, the door was iron-bound and double-locked; another door, leading into an adjoining cell, was also iron-bound and locked, and he had no tool or weapon to work with, his knife



having been taken from him when he was brought before Colonel Allende.

As he was condemned to death, he was allowed a light and a prayer-book was given to him, after which he was left to himself. As the book was a Catholic publication, printed in Spanish, and interspersed with Latin, it was of no use to Bill Robbins, and he laid it aside, and gave himself up to his reflections, which were sad enough. He was a brave man, was not afraid of death, and was ready to meet his fate like a man; but it hurt him to think that he must be shot down uselessly, without a chance to strike a blow for life and liberty.

So the hours wore on, until it was near midnight, when he concluded that he had better go to bed and endeavor to pass the time in sleep, until his last hour should arrive.

"Confound that Man in Green!" he muttered, as he took off his ragged coat. "It is all through him that I am in this fix; but, if he should come here now, or if the Old Harry himself should come, and offer to help me get out, I believe I would jump at the chance."

He instantly remembered the old proverb about talking of the evil one, for the door that led into the next room was opened as a key was turned in the lock, and in the opening he saw the green clothes, yellowish green face, and grayish green eyes, of the very man he had been speaking about.

"Onpossible!" he exclaimed. "How in the name of Nick did you come here?"

"Never mind," answered the Man in Green. "I am here, and I have come to save you."

"Whar' did you come from, and what do you want me to do?"

"Never mind where I came from, it is sufficient that I am here. All you have to do, if you wish to live, is to follow me."

"Lead on," said the hunter. "I am ready and thankful."

His conductor led him into the next cell, carefully locking the door that he had opened; thence into a room in which furniture was stored; and thence, down a flight of steps, into the prison-yard. Crossing the yard, they came to a light rope ladder that hung over the wall. His guide mounted this, and



quickly reached the other side. Robbins followed his example, and found himself in the street, and then the ladder was taken down.

"Can you find your way to your camp, from where you are?" asked the Man in Green.

"Reckon I can, thank you."

"Hasten, then, and be careful. Let no grass grow under your feet, but get out of this city as soon as possible. Now go!"

Robbins took a few steps, and then turned to speak to his strange preserver, but the Man in Green had disappeared.

"It is confounded queer," he muttered; "but thar' is one thing certain—whether he is human or spirit, man or devil, I am free, and I will take his advice."

So saying, he "picked up his feet," and walked briskly, as he had been told to do.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE RIGHT MESSENGER.

FRANK COYLE had been favored with an interview with Maria Saluda, in the room at the old Jew's house, and returned to Captain Del Rios' apartments rather late in the afternoon, but in time to be well abused by that worthy officer for his truant habits, which, as the captain declared, were getting to be quite unbearable.

"Now tell me, Don Jose," said Del Rios, "where have you been, and what have you been doing with yourself, nearly all day?"

"You know, my dear captain," answered Frank, "that I am only 'a looker-on here in Vienna,' and I exercise my privilege of looking on. Now, it leads me this way, and then it leads me that way, and one sight or one adventure naturally draws me on to another, so that I do not notice how the time passes."

"That is a very unsatisfactory explanation; but I suppose I must accept it, as I am not likely to get a better one. But I



would like to ask, Señor Looker-on, where you have been wandering to-day, and what adventures you have encountered."

"I can only answer that I have been rambling, most sage inquisitor. As for adventures, I have had none that were worth remembering."

"Did you meet Colonel Allende in the course of your rambles?"

"I did not. I have not seen him since he gave me what he called his warning."

"You had better beware of that fellow, Don Jose, for I am convinced that he means mischief. I believe that he is really jealous of you, though I see no reason why he should be, as you say that you have not called at Señora Ladega's since the night of the ball. For my part, I have no more hope in that quarter, and am quite heart-broken. I called at the house, dressed in my finest, and carrying an elegant bouquet, but saw no one except the old lady, who politely informed me that Señorita Saluda did not see company. As I am unable even to see her, my numerous charms and accomplishments have no opportunity for producing an impression. They keep her as close as a mouse in a bandbox, for fear, I suppose, that she will give the pig-eyed colonel the slip. If she really loved him, and wished to marry him, they would not find it necessary to guard her so jealously."

"I think you are right in that opinion, captain; but I see no reason why Colonel Allende should have a quarrel with me. If he imagines that I have wronged him, or that I mean to wrong him, I wish he would say so plainly, in order that the matter may be settled, by fair words or fair blows. I never object to meeting an open enemy, but I confess that I am disposed to dread a secret foe."

"It is not the colonel's nature to act fairly, my friend. If he concludes to hate you, the first intimation you are likely to have of it is a blow from some quarter and in some manner that you least suspect. I am sorry to say, also, that that disagreeable priest, Padre Augustin, is taking a particular interest in you. He has lately asked me a number of questions concerning you."

"Indeed! What does his sacred ugliness wish to know?"



"He has inquired about your habits. He is anxious to know—in a very polite and roundabout way—how you pass your time, where you go, and what you talk about when we are together. He considers me, as a true son of the Church, in duty bound to give him all such information."

"Of course you have done so."

"Certainly. I have given him information that might be valuable, if it happened to be true. I have informed him that you are very regular in your habits, and that you are one of the best boys in the world, spending the greater part of your time in writing letters to your dear mother, and in keeping up your journal. I suppose he will soon wish me to show him that imaginary journal. He has also been asking questions of the servants in the house, and I can not help thinking, Don Jose, between you and me, that all this has some reference to Señorita Saluda, and that there must be *some* fire where there is so much smoke."

"And I can not help thinking that you are talking nonsense. Let us drink a glass of wine, Del Rios, and forget those unpleasant people and their petty jealousies and intrigues."

"If you had been at home to-day, instead of playing truant," said the captain, as he set out the wine, "you might have gone with me to witness the trial of a Texan spy. Perhaps you would have recognized him."

"It is not likely, although it is possible. What sort of a man was he?"

"Rather an old man, and not at all prepossessing in appearance. He was clothed in rags, and had been going about the streets as a beggar, but an American hunting-knife was found in his clothes. His capture was caused by his running into a squad of soldiers, who arrested him, and who soon discovered that he was not a Mexican. When he was brought before Colonel Allende, he confessed that he was an American, but said that he did not belong to the army."

"What was done with him?"

"An escaped prisoner swore that he saw him in the camp of the Texans, and that settled the matter, though it is as likely as not that the fellow lied. He was told that he would not be treated as a spy, if he would give some needed



information about his comrades, but he positively refused to open his mouth on that subject, and Colonel Allende sentenced him to be shot to-morrow morning at sunrise. General Cos confirmed the sentence, and to-morrow's sun will be the last the poor fellow will see."

"That is quick work and short notice. What is his name?"

"William Robbins is the name he gave."

Frank Coyle started, and turned pale, spilling his wine on the table.

"What is the matter, Don Jose?" earnestly asked the captain. "Has that name given you a shock? Did you happen to know him?"

"I think so. If I remember rightly, Robbins was the name of the man who saved me from being murdered when I was captured by the Texan brigands. He did not belong to their army then, but I understood that he was a hunter. I can hardly believe him to be a man who would consent to act the part of a spy, and think he must have come to the city for some other purpose. Was he asked what his object was?"

"He was, but he refused to disclose it, and nothing more could be got out of him. You may be sure that he was given a fair chance to explain himself, for I acted as interpreter."

"If he is the man I have spoken of, it is a pity that he should be shot. At least, I could wish that his case might have a fuller investigation. Do you suppose any thing could be done to save him, captain?"

"To speak frankly, I do not. It would be necessary to make application to Colonel Allende, and he loves you just well enough to be glad of a chance to shoot any one whom you might choose to befriend. He entertains about the same degree of affection for Captain Del Rios."

"Perhaps General Cos might be induced to revoke the order, or to grant a reprieve."

"It is hardly possible. He would do nothing in the matter without consulting Allende, and that would settle the question."

"If money could help the man who saved my life, I would willingly give it."



"You know very well that Allende is too rich to be bribed."

"I must leave you for a while, captain," said Coyle, suddenly rising. "I will return before long."

"Will you not wait for your supper?"

"I had a late dinner, and your late suppers do not agree with me."

"Where are you going? Do you mean to try to get that Texan fellow clear?"

"I want to learn something more about him, if I can."

"You had better take me with you. Perhaps I may be of service. If he is a friend of yours, I shall be glad to help him."

"I am greatly obliged to you, my dear captain, but I think I can do better alone, if I succeed in doing any thing at all. He may not be the man I think he is."

"Go your way Señor Willfulness. I wish you success in all your undertakings, whatever they may be, and I will sit up until you return."

Frank Coyle felt very sad and downhearted when he left his friend. He was sure that the prisoner under sentence could be no other than Bill Robbins, the friend of his boyhood and his tutor in woodcraft. He well knew that the object of the hunter was to search for him, believing him to be in danger or difficulty, and his duty, as well as his inclination, prompted him to leave no means untried to effect the release of his old friend. With his sorrow was mingled a feeling of petulance, and he was half angry with Robbins for having undertaken such a useless task—for having run his head into danger unnecessarily.

"If he should, by any possibility, get out of this scrape," thought Frank, "I will never let him speak to me of wild-goose chases again."

The young gentleman had somehow got an idea that old Isaac, the Jew, possessed some kind of mysterious power, which might be made available in some undefinable manner. With this vague notion, he went to the house of the money-lender, and happened to find him at home, looking over some accounts.

Frank stated the case to him, telling him who and what the



prisoner really was, and asked whether it was possible to do any thing to save Robbins, but the old man shook his head very decidedly.

"It is useless to make any attempt, and vain to hope for his release," said he. "You would only expose yourself to suspicion, and make the matter worse. If it were possible to do any thing, it is now too late. Your friend has acted very foolishly, and you ought not to allow yourself to be drawn into trouble by him. He saw Señorita Saluda to-day, and she informed him that you were safe and well, and advised him to leave Bexar, as he would do more harm than good by remaining. He would not follow her advice, and the consequences are likely to be serious."

"Can you do nothing for him? You seem able to do a great deal."

"You are mistaken if you suppose that I have any power or influence," answered Isaac. "I have my little money, and some of the fine officers come to me to borrow it; but when they do not want money, they curse me for a Jew."

"Is it not possible that Señorita Saluda may have some influence that could be used in behalf of my friend?"

"If she had any, she would not be allowed to use it, and it would not be proper for her to do so. Besides, it is too late to make an attempt."

"Is there nothing, then, that can be done?"

"I can think of nothing."

Frank hesitated for a moment, then suddenly put on his hat, bid the Jew good night, and left the house.

As a last resort, he determined to see General Cos, to represent to him that Robbins had saved his life from the Mexicans, and to make a personal appeal for his life.

He had some distance to walk to the quarters of General Cos, and it was quite late when he arrived there, just late enough to disappoint his expectations, for the General had gone to bed, and was not to be disturbed on any account. Frank persisted in endeavoring to gain admission, but the sentinel was inexorable, protesting that it would be as much as his life was worth to awake the General, and the young gentleman was obliged to go away in a very unenviable state of mind.



Slowly and moodily he walked to the house in which he lodged with Captain Del Rios, and then, struck by a new idea, he turned away without entering, and went toward the jail in which Robbins was confined, with no particular purpose, but in the hope that "something might turn up."

He had just reached the block in which the jail was situated, when he saw a ragged-looking man walking rapidly toward him, and at once recognized the broad shoulders, erect form, and long stride of Bill Robbins. He rushed to meet him, and was not more overjoyed at the encounter than was the old hunter.

"How did you get free?" eagerly asked Frank.

"It's just the strangest thing in the world, Master Frank, and it clean beats me. I had given up hopin', and was goin' to lie down and take some sleep, when a door opened, and who, in the name of the Old Harry, should walk in, but that spirituous or devilous Man in Green, who has been botherin' the life out of me ever since I first met him. He got me out of that prison in a hurry, and set me down in the street, and told me to make tracks for our camp as fast as I could."

"It was very good advice, old friend, and you must follow it. You need not trouble yourself about me, as I am in no danger, and want no assistance. I am glad that I have met you, for you can render a very important service to Texas. Tell the General, and tell the men, that about half the garrison here are opposed to Santa Anna, and do not desire to fight under him. Our friends might have had the town long ago, and they can take it whenever they choose, by a determined effort. A bold night attack will do the work, and they will find that a large portion of the garrison will hardly offer any resistance."

"Is that true, Master Frank?"

"I believe it is true, Robbins, and I want you to make haste and carry the information to the camp. I have written a letter, but it may not have been received, and General Barleson, who does not know me as well as General Austin did, may not be willing to believe what is written. He will believe what you say, however, and the sooner you reach the camp the better, for too much time has been wasted on this siege already."



"I am off, Master Frank, and I'll warrant that the greasers don't catch me, this time. Good-by, my boy, and God bless you!"

"Good-by, old friend!"

Robbins walked down the street with long strides, and Frank Coyle returned to his rooms, where he found Captain Del Rios still sitting up, but very sleepy and disgusted.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### CAUGHT AND CAGED.

CAPTAIN DEL RIOS was obliged, greatly to his displeasure, to rise early in the morning, to go out and attend to his guard duties; but he returned at breakfast-time, and his countenance was expressive of considerable astonishment.

"I wish you joy, Don Jose," said he, "for your friend has escaped. When they went for him this morning, to take him out and shoot him, the cell was empty, and the bird had flown."

"Are you sure he had escaped? Perhaps he had only been removed into another cell."

"There is no perhaps about it. Allende is so angry that he hardly knows whether he stands on his head or his heels. He has had the keeper of the prison and all his deputies and assistants before him, and has ordered them under arrest until the matter can be investigated. All the doors were locked; there was nothing to show how the prisoner could have made his escape, and there is no avoiding the conclusion that he must have been assisted by some of the officials of the prison. It was a very neat thing, Don Jose, and so quickly done. How much did it cost you?"

"You are greatly mistaken, my dear captain, if you suppose that I had any thing to do with the escape," answered Frank. "I assure you, upon my honor, that I had neither hand nor finger in it. Much as I wished to assist the man, I found myself powerless to do so. Having discovered that he was



the same person who had befriended me, I went to the quarters of General Cos, in the hope that I might be able to do something for him, but was unable even to obtain admittance."

"Do you really mean to tell me, Don Jose, that you did not aid in effecting that man's release, by money, by influence, or by any other means?"

"I solemnly assure you that I did not—that I had nothing at all to do with it."

"I am bound to believe you; though it seems strange that he should have made his escape directly after you had manifested such an interest in him. It is fortunate, Don Jose, that you did not speak of your desire to assist him to any one but me, for suspicion would undoubtedly have rested upon you, and you might have got into serious difficulty. As it is, I heard Colonel Allende and that disagreeable priest whispering together about the matter, and I am sure that your name was mentioned more than once. I am afraid the priest has spies in this house, and I advise you to keep your thoughts to yourself, and to stay in your room to-day."

Frank Coyle followed this advice very faithfully, until toward evening, when he went to the house of the old Jew, for an interview that had been appointed by Maria.

He found Isaac at home, writing, and looking over his accounts, and was admitted by him into the inner room, where he found the young lady waiting for him. She could grant him but a little time, as she said that she was watched more closely than ever by Padre Augustin and her aunt, and the interview was soon terminated. Frank returned to the Jew's sanctum, where he took a seat.

"I understand that your friend has escaped," said Isaac. "The news has created quite an excitement in Bexar."

"Yes, he has escaped," answered Frank. "This is the first time I have been out to-day, and I have not heard what the people say about it."

"They consider it a most wonderful escape, and are at a loss to imagine how he got out. They can only account for it by supposing that he was assisted by some one inside of the prison. Perhaps you can tell how it occurred, señor, as you were here at a late hour, eager to do something to aid him."



"He was released by a person of whom you know something, I suppose—by the writer of that note in green ink, which you showed me."

"How do you know that?"

"I met my friend directly after his escape, and he told me who had released him, and how it was done."

"You met him! That was fortunate. Has he left the city?"

"When I last saw him, he was making all possible haste to get out of Bexar."

"You had an opportunity, it seems to me, of sending some intelligence by him, if you wished to."

"I had, and I took advantage of it. I told him to tell General Burleson and his men that the city can be taken by a *coup de main*, and that they ought to attack at once."

"You told him to say that? That is excellent, señor, and it is fortunate, as it has turned out that your friend came in search of you. It is always better to send such information by word of mouth than to put it in writing."

"I wish you would tell me something about that person who released my friend. You know him, and can inform me who and what he is. How does he enter Bexar so easily, and come and go between the city and the Texan camp? How is he able to go to the jail and take out a prisoner at his pleasure?"

"I can not tell you, señor. If you ask me of what the sun and the plants are composed, I can refer to books which pretend to teach us about it; but I have no books that treat of that man or any one like him, and you must excuse me if I confess my ignorance and say nothing about him."

"That is to say, if you do know any thing about him, you mean to keep your knowledge to yourself. Well, I suppose you are right, old man, as I have always found you so, and I will bid you good-night."

"Good-night, señor. I advise you to look behind you and on all sides as you walk, for there is danger lurking about."

Frank Coyle felt quite cheerful and light-hearted as he left the old Jew and turned his steps homeward. His friend Robbins had been saved from prison and from death, and would



carry to the Texan camp the news that would probably cause the volunteers to make a bold dash and wrest the city from the Mexicans. Above all, he had had a very pleasant and satisfactory interview, although a brief one, with Maria Salda, and he hoped to be able, within a few days at least, to claim her as his bride, in spite of Padre Augustin and Colonel Allende.

It was natural that he should feel cheerful and light-hearted, for he had not noticed that when he left his lodgings a man followed him, and dogged his steps until he entered Isaac's house, when the same person stationed himself in the vicinity, watched the door until he came out, and then followed him again. But he soon discovered that he was under espionage. When men are followed with an evil purpose, they often have an instinctive feeling that they are followed, and this was the case with Frank Coyle. The feeling grew upon him, and became so strong that he suddenly turned around and caught sight of his follower as he dodged behind the corner of a house.

Again he perceived that he was followed, and he concluded to walk back a short distance. As he did so, he saw the man who had been dogging him snugly concealed in the angle of a high stone wall, and he seized him by the collar and dragged him out of his hiding-place.

"It is you who have been following me, you sneaking scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "I have a great mind to shake the truth out of you, and make you confess who set you on to this; but I will let you off, as I think I know who it is. If you attempt to follow me again I will break your rascally head!"

So saying, he gave the man a shake and a shove that sent him whirling into the middle of the street, and continued his walk toward his lodgings.

His course lay, for a short distance, in the principal thoroughfare, and he had proceeded up the street about a block and a half, when he was startled by the sound of a shrill whistle behind him.

He stopped, and partly turned around, thinking he was again followed, when a lasso was thrown over his head, and drawn tight around his neck, and he was dragged, half



strangled, into a narrow passage-way. A door was closed behind him, and his arms were pinioned before he could even think of resistance.

"What does this mean?" he asked, as soon as he could get his breath. "Are you robbers, or murderers?"

There was no reply, and his eyes were bandaged, so that he could not take note of his captors, and he had no means of judging who or what they were, until a harsh voice gave an order.

"Take him away! Put him in the stone room, and leave him there!"

Frank was sure that he knew the voice; it was that of Colonel Allen de; and he vowed vengeance upon the cowardly wretch, if he should live to execute it.

He had no time to speak his thoughts, for a door creaked as if on rusty hinges, and he was seized and forcibly thrust down a few steps, into a small and damp room that was well suited for the purposes of a dungeon. The rope that bound his arms was cut, the door was closed behind him, the key was turned in the lock, and he was left alone.

He tore the bandage from his eyes, but found himself in such total darkness that he could not see his hand before him. He felt his way around the walls, to determine what sort of a place he was in, and was soon satisfied concerning its character and extent.

As he groped about he stumbled against something, which he examined, and discovered to be a pitcher of water and a loaf of bread. He also found a pile of straw, that smelt clean, and, as he could think of nothing better to do at that time, he laid down on it, and tried to sleep.



## CHAPTER XII.

## THE DASH AT BEXAR.

BILL ROBBINS obeyed the instructions of the Man in Green and of Frank Coyle, and let no grass grow under his feet as he got out of Bexar. He left the city in the same way as he had entered it, and had no difficulty in worming his way through the lines. He was fired upon by a Mexican soldier, but the blundering bullet went wide of the mark, and his long legs soon put him out of danger, and brought him to the Texan camp.

He went directly to General Burleson's quarters, where he told his story, omitting the part performed by the Man in Green, and simply stating that he had escaped. He then explained the situation of affairs within the town, as Frank Coyle had related it to him, and assured the General that the city could be taken by a bold and sudden dash, and that strong position secured to Texas.

General Burleson listened with evident impatience, and with some signs of displeasure.

"It appears," said he, "that my men think they know more about my duty than I know, and every man of them expects me to believe what he says, and to follow his counsel. I have received a statement in writing to the same effect as your statement, from the man you speak of, but I have seen no reason to give it any credence. I can not accept the say-so of every man who comes along."

"But Master Frank Coyle is a gentleman, General," persisted Robbins. "He is a Kentuckian and a true man, and General Austin knew him well."

"I have nothing to do with General Austin's knowledge. I find no such name as Coyle upon the rolls, either as officer or private, and there is no reason why I should take his word, in preference to my own observation and experience."

"But Master Frank is a true man, and he would never tell you any thin' that wasn't really so."



"That may be; but I know nothing of him, and I do know that the city of Bexar is so strongly fortified that I can not take it with the force under my command. Besides, I have already given orders for a retreat to Gonzales, to go into winter quarters. Part of the army went last evening, and all will leave to-day."

Robbins went out with a sad heart, for it seemed to him that the sun was about to rise on the last day of the struggle for Texan liberty. More than a month the army had been before San Antonio, during which time nothing had been accomplished, and now it was to retreat ingloriously, and leave with the Mexicans the prestige of victory and the solid advantage of the possession of the fortified town. This would be bad news, he thought, for Frank Coyle, who would be hourly expecting to hear the crack of the Texan rifles in Bexar.

Among the men and the other officers, however, he found a very different state of feeling. Those who had deserted had done so because they had come from their homes unprovided for the winter season, expecting a short and active campaign, and they were unwilling to remain longer without doing any thing, especially as their time of service had expired. Those who were left were thoroughly tired of inaction and delay, and had been demanding, for some time, that an assault should be made upon the city. Their daring scouts had penetrated into Bexar, making themselves acquainted with its vulnerable points, and it was generally believed that the defenders must succumb to a resolute attack. They had twice been promised that an assault should be made; but each of the appointed days passed without any movement; and, instead of the expected fight, they received orders to retreat. At this they were greatly displeased and disheartened, and many were loud in their reproaches, accusing the Commander-in-chief of cowardice and incompetency.

The news that was brought by Robbins came as a God-send to the volunteers, for it reached them just at the right time, and found them in the proper spirit to believe it and to act upon it. They had enlisted for the purpose of fighting, and were not satisfied to abandon the campaign without a fight. They had come to San Antonio for the purpose of



taking the town, and were not disposed to leave without making an effort.

Bill Robbins was the spark that set fire to the fuel, and the camp was soon in a blaze of excitement. There was no more talk among the men about going home, or about retreating to winter quarters, but the sturdy volunteers were eager for the fray, and demanded to be led to the assault.

They had no difficulty in finding a leader, and they made an excellent choice, selecting Benjamin R. Milam, one of the bravest men that ever lived. He accepted the command, and about two hundred and fifty men ranged themselves under his leadership, all resolved to take the city, and ready to shed their blood freely in the cause of liberty. The proceedings were orderly, although they were conducted in a very democratic and independent manner, without any regard for General Burleson or his orders. The men felt that they were, in fact, no longer subject to his command, as their term of service had expired, and that they were at liberty to carry on the war in their own way.

It was determined to make a night attack, or, rather, to take advantage of that early morning hour when it is so hard to shake off sleep, and the morning of the next day, the 5th of December, was fixed upon for the attempt.

At three o'clock in the morning, Colonel Neil, with a company of artillery, by a circuitous route, crossed the San Antonio river near its source, and came before the Alamo, a strong fort situated opposite to the city, on the east side of the river.

At daylight, he opened fire upon the fort, for the purpose of distracting the attention of the Mexicans, while Colonel Milam, with the main body of his gallant volunteers charged into the city on the west.

The surprise was complete. The Mexicans were confident that the fortified town could withstand any attack; they believed that the Texan force was daily decreasing, and the report had been circulated that General Burleson was about to withdraw and abandon the siege; consequently they felt themselves secure, no more expecting an attack than they looked for the heavens to fall, and were taken entirely unawares, many soldiers being captured, some of whom were taken in



their beds. Colonel Neil, as soon as he was informed by the firing in the town that Milam's attack had been successful, turned away from the Alamo, recrossed the river, and joined his comrades in Bexar.

Among the first to enter the town was Bill Robbins, who had been selected to command a company, but who preferred fighting on his own hook, after his usual fashion. As he pressed on, availing himself of every possible shelter, loading carefully, and firing with sure aim, he was surprised to see, within a few feet of him, the Man in Green, who uttered a wild yell as he discharged his green rifle.

Robbins was the more surprised at this unexpected apparition, as he had not seen that mysterious personage in the camp, and was sure that he had not been among the volunteers when they set out to make the assault. All his superstitions and suspicions concerning the diabolical character of the Man in Green returned to him, though he strove to cast them aside, and to remember only the service that had been rendered him.

"Whar' in thunder did you come from now, old man?" he exclaimed, as his strange companion quickly reloaded his rifle.

"Hush!" whispered the Man in Green. "Do you see that greaser yonder, raising his ugly face above a parapet? He is a dead greaser already, if he knew it; but he shall know nothing any more."

Raising his rifle he fired, without seeming to take aim, and the owner of the face bounded up into the air, and fell back on the roof of the house. The Man in Green, with a wild yell, again hastened to load.

"But whar' did you 'light down from, old man?" persisted Robbins. "You wasn't with the rest of us when we left the camp, sure-lee."

"Where did I come from? I came from the air, from the earth, from the regions above the clouds, from the bottomless pit. I am a bird of the air; I am a burrowing dog. I fly and I creep; I do any thing to kill greasers."

"I hain't had a chance yet to thank you for getting me out of that blasted prison and savin' my life, and I want to do it now."



"Do you say that you wish to thank *me*? Do you say that I save life? I destroy it, for I am an avenger of blood. Speak no more of prisons or of thanks. This is not a time for words. Spare your breath for hard work, and push on, push on, and kill greasers! Kill them, for they must all die! The word has been spoken, and they shall all die—greasers and priests—they shall all, all die!"

Suiting the action to the word, the Man in Green rushed forward into the hottest of the fight, and was closely followed, by Robbins, who was animated by an equal enthusiasm, though his motives were not so sanguinary as those of the other.

The city had been entered, but it had not been taken, for the fortified public square was yet to be gained, and that was the real task for the Texans to perform. They were unable to use their artillery, and were continually exposed to a heavy fire from the guns in the square and at the Alamo. Many of the stone houses, also, were fortified, and the Mexicans kept up a fusilade from their windows and from the parapets on the roofs. Nevertheless, the brave volunteers pressed on, driving the enemy from house to house, drawing nearer and nearer to the public square, and silencing the artillery, at times, by the deadly fire of their rifles.

Among those in the advance were Bill Robbins and the Man in Green, who had been fighting side by side during the greater part of the day, distinguishing themselves by their intrepidity and by the accuracy of their fire. About the middle of the afternoon they found themselves, together with Captain Hays and a few of his men, in the shelter of a heavy stone building, in sight and within range of the square.

All were tired, grimy and hungry, and they took from their pockets and wallets, as they sat down and rested themselves, such slender store of provisions as they had been able to bring, eating like men who had been hard at work, and who knew that they had more hard work before them. Robbins, with the forethought of a veteran hunter, had taken care to bring a good supply, and the Man in Green had his "cold flour," which he mixed with water from a canteen.

"If we were only inside of that house, cap'n," said Robbins, looking wistfully at the stone building, "we might get up on the roof, and pick off thar' gunners as easy as winkin'."



"You are right, Robbins," answered the captain, "and we must get up there. The house must be uninhabited, for there is no sign of life about it. Suppose you try the door, Wardrop, and see if there is any one within who is disposed to admit us."

One of the men went to the door of the house and tried it, but it was locked. He pushed against it with his foot and his shoulder, but the stout wood refused to yield. He then rapped upon it lustily, and was soon answered by a knocking from within, but the door remained closed.

"There is somebody in the house, captain," he said, as he returned to his comrades, "and I heard a hammering, as if they are barring the door, or making it stronger. It is a stout door."

"We will soon break through their barricades," answered Hays, ordering the men to get a heavy plank that was lying in the street.

The plank was brought, and was directed against the closed entrance by the stout arms of half a dozen men. By three well-delivered blows the door was shattered and driven from its hinges, and the Texans rushed into the house.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### PLAIN SPEAKING.

FRANK COYLE found it a very difficult matter to get asleep, the night of his imprisonment. His scanty couch of straw was uncomfortable enough, but he had slept on the ground too often to allow such a slight inconvenience to disturb his rest. He was kept awake by his troubled thoughts, for he could not help admitting that he found himself in a very unpleasant position, if not in a dangerous one.

He knew well that he was in the power of Colonel Allende, and he had reason to believe that the colonel's confederate, the beetle-browed priest, was also concerned in his capture. From such men he felt that he would receive no mercy, if



their interest or their inclination prompted them to treat him as an enemy. It was plain that both had their suspicions with regard to his intimacy with Maria Saluda, and it was possible that the wily priest might have some idea of his true character, for Frank could no longer doubt that he had been under espionage at his lodgings, and that he had been dogged by spies wherever he went.

But his great trouble was concerning Maria. What would be done with her, while he lay there in a dungeon, unable to assist her or to foil the plans of Allende and the priest? At this time, of all others, he wished to be free, when he was expecting that an attack would be made by the Texans, and hoping that he might be able, during the melee, to carry her beyond their reach. As it was, they had a clear field for their operations, and he had not the ghost of a chance to oppose them.

These reflections, combined with the solitude and the oppressive darkness of his dungeon, and the feeling that he was locked and barred from the world, helpless and alone, almost maddened him, and he was so restless and tortured that it was a long time before sleep visited his eyes.

He awoke about dawn, and the gray light that shone through a crevice or loop-hole in the wall made the darkness sufficiently visible to enable him to form an idea of the place in which he was confined.

A brief inspection was all that was needed, for there was nothing to be seen but four stone walls, and two stone steps, that led to a door, which was made of two thicknesses of oak plank, securely bolted together and studded with nails, and fastened by a large and strong lock. Frank shook his head sadly, as he acknowledged the strength of his dungeon, and he sounded the stone walls with his hatchet, with the same hopeless result.

While he was pursuing his investigations, the light grew stronger, showing that it was fairly daybreak, and his ear caught the sound of cannon that were being fired at irregular intervals, from the direction, as well as he could judge, of the Alamo.

His heart beat high with hope, for he conjectured that the **Texans** were already making the attack which he had urged



them to make. But why, in the name of common sense, he thought, do they commence at the Alamo, when the city lies right before them?

He listened again, and was soon convinced that he could hear the cracking of the Texan rifles. The sound was at a distance, and was quite faint, but Frank Coyle's practiced ear could not mistake the well known reports. They came nearer and nearer, until he fancied that he could hear the cheers of his friends. The shouts of the Mexicans he could plainly hear, and he knew that the Texans had entered the city, of a part of which, at least, they must hold possession. It was irksome enough to the brave and ardent young man to be shut up there while his friends were fighting, like a hound in a kennel when the hunters are abroad; but there was no help for it, and he could only console himself with the thought that they might possibly succeed and rescue him from his captivity.

His eyes fell on the loaf of bread and the pitcher of water that were on the floor, and he commenced to eat the unpalatable food, thinking that he had better try to keep from starving, as long as any food was placed within his reach.

He had hardly finished this plain repast, when there was a noise outside of his cell, his door was opened, and Padre Augustin made his appearance, followed by several armed soldiers.

"Remain here, and keep within call until I come out," said the priest, as he turned to the soldiers, and then entered the cell and closed the door behind him.

"I am truly grieved to see you here, my son," was the greeting of the wily ecclesiastic, who smiled benignantly as his lips uttered this transparent falsehood.

"I will thank you to dispense with hypocrisy for the present," answered Frank. "I would much prefer plain speaking. If it grieves you to see me here, you can easily set me at liberty. But I know that you are not grieved about it. I know that I was assaulted in a most cowardly manner, and was dragged in here and unlawfully imprisoned, by men who were acting under the orders of Colonel Allende, to which act of violence I believe that you were an accessory. I now wish



to know what is the meaning of this outrage, and why I am subjected to this indignity."

"You assume a high tone, young man," said the priest, with a bitter sneer; "but I think you will moderate it before you leave this place. As you wish plain speaking, I will inform you that your intrigue with Señorita Saluda has been discovered."

"I have had no intrigue with Señorita Saluda."

"Call it what you please—your love affair, if you will. I tell you that she was to be married to Colonel Allende, and the colonel himself had given you proper and timely warning on the subject; but you would not heed advice; you persisted in doing what you had been forbidden to do, and you now feel the consequences. When I found a locket, containing your miniature, in the possession of Señorita Saluda, we concluded that the case was clear, and that the time had arrived for extreme measures."

"Is it part of the duty of members of the priesthood to examine the toilet trinkets of young ladies?"

"It becomes so, when the interests of the ladies and of the Church may be served thereby. I can tell you further, that there has been a watch set upon you, and that all your actions and movements have been known. Although it is not positively ascertained that you have frequently met the young lady without the knowledge of her friends, yet circumstances leave no doubt of it."

"Do you consider such proceedings fair and honorable, or are they merely a specimen of priestcraft?"

"Whether they may or may not seem honorable to you, they were necessary, and were justified by the circumstances. They were, at least, as honorable as acting the part of a spy. But this is not all there is against you. You are accused of having aided the escape of a Texan prisoner who had been condemned to be shot, and the proof is quite clear against you. The servants at your lodgings were in my employ, and they reported to me your conversation with Captain Del Rios, in which you expressed so much sympathy and friendship for the prisoner, and declared your intention of aiding his escape."

"I only expressed sympathy for a man who had befriended



me, and stated my desire to effect his release by lawful means."

"You would find it hard to induce any one to believe that you did not assist him to escape. But there is another, and a more serious charge against you. I have seen the old lady who formerly acted as duenna to Señorita Saluda, and she has informed me that the Señorita met an American at Natchitoches, who fell in love with her, and of whom she became enamored. He persisted in forcing his attentions upon her, in spite of the wishes and efforts of her protectors, and it was only by adroit maneuvering and rapid traveling that they could get rid of him and reach this city without being annoyed by his company. She gave me a description of the obtrusive individual, with which description, señor, your appearance exactly corresponds. The presumption is, therefore, that you are an American and a spy."

"A strong presumption, truly."

"This presumption was rendered a certainty by another discovery, which was not exactly unexpected by me. You came to the city, and were received among us, as Don Jose Maria de Limontado, a wealthy Cuban gentleman, who had been captured by the Texans as he was journeying toward Mexico. You wore his clothes, and you had his passport and some of his letters, and you were generally believed to be the person you pretended to be. Lately, however, the real Señor de Limontado has arrived, having been liberated by General Burleson, and he is now in the city. He has documents with him that fully prove him to be such as he represents, and he was astonished to learn that a counterfeit of himself had been receiving the polite attentions of the citizens of Bexar."

This was news that was entirely unlooked for by Frank, and he abused General Burleson in his heart for his indiscreet action, quite as severely as he had been abused by his soldiers for his inaction.

"Thus it is plain," continued the priest, "that you are liable to be shot for aiding the escape of a condemned prisoner, and that you are liable to be hung as an American spy. If you are tried on either charge, conviction and death are certain."

"Suppose all this to be true," coolly returned Coyle; "suppose that I am enamored of Señorita Saluda, and that she



favors my suit, suppose that I did aid the escape of the prisoner; suppose that I am an American and a spy, in an assumed character and under an assumed name; the question arises, why have you come here, and what do you propose to do?"

"I have brought a document which I desire you to sign," said the padre, producing a paper from his pocket. "By signing it, you relinquish any claim you may have, or imagine you have, to the hand of Señorita Saluda; you release her from any promise or engagement she may have made to you; you request her to marry your friend, as the paper calls him, Colonel Allende; and you promise that you will in no manner attempt to prevent or interfere with such marriage. When you have signed the paper you will be set at liberty, and will be furnished with a safe conduct beyond the lines of our army."

"That is a very liberal offer, if I am as completely in your power as you say I am. Suppose I refuse to sign—what then?"

"Then you will be left here, without food or water, until you starve to death."

"That is plain speaking, and I am obliged to you for your frankness. The alternative is a hard one; but I can easily make up my mind."

"Are you ready to sign?"

"I refuse to sign my name to a lie. I prefer to starve."

"I advise you to think better of your determination. It is a lingering and painful death."

A sanguinary thought crossed the young man's mind. His weapons had not been taken from him; his pistols and his dagger were still on his person. Should he kill this cruel and cold-blooded priest, and then rush out and attempt to cut his way through the soldiers at the door? It was possible that he might succeed in getting out of the house, but almost certain capture and death awaited him in the street; and he concluded that it would be wiser to take the chance of receiving assistance from his friends.

"Do you hear those guns, Sir Priest?" he asked. "Do you recognize the sharp reports of the American rifles? It seems to me that the Texans are in Bexar."



“It is true that they have made a feeble attack with a small force, and that they have effected a lodgment in the suburbs but they do not dare to approach the plaza, which is the stronghold of the city, and they will soon be driven from the ground they now hold. This attack is only a demonstration to cover the retreat of the main body, which has already commenced, and I assure you that you are leaning on a broken reed, if you rely upon their assistance. Are you ready to sign?”

“I am not, and it is useless to ask me again.”

“Then I leave you to your fate.”

The priest left the cell, the door was closed and locked, and Frank Coyle listened to the tramp of the soldiers as they marched away.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### TEXAS AND LIBERTY!

“I SUPPOSE I ought to consider that offer a very liberal one,” soliloquized the young man, when he was again alone; “but I must confess that I can not appreciate it, for it seems to me that they would not be willing to make such easy terms if they were sure that I am in their power, and if they were really able to prove the charges they make against me. It is possible that what was said by the priest concerning the real Don Jose de Limontado was only a shrewd guess of his own, and that no such person has arrived in Bexar. However, it makes little or no difference, as I am here, and here the worthy padre says I must stay until I starve to death. He neglected to take away the rest of my bread and water, and that may be sufficient to support life until I am relieved by my friends.”

As the Texan rifles sounded nearer, the young man's hopes of liberty rose higher; but he was soon depressed and troubled by another thought, that would obtrude itself upon him, in spite of his efforts to shake it off. The place of his confinement was some distance from the street, and it was not probable that he could make himself heard by his friends, if they should succeed in gaining possession of the city. The



chances were, also, that they would pass by the house without entering it, and it might be many days before any relief arrived, during which time he would probably suffer the death to which he had been doomed.

In this unpromising condition of affairs, he concluded that he would be lost, unless he could procure his freedom by his own efforts, and that appeared to be impossible. He wished that he had followed his first impulse—that he had killed the priest and endeavored to cut his way through the guards, for the prospect now seemed more gloomy to him than before.

He examined the lock on his cell door, and found it to be a large and substantial one, secured to the oak in the best manner. He bethought himself of his pistols, which were loaded, and fired one of them at the outer edge of the lock, hoping to tear off the plate. The bullet was flattened against the iron, making an indentation, and slightly forcing the lock from the door. He fired the other pistol, with the same result, and was obliged to admit that his object could not be accomplished in that way. He had nothing to work with as his dagger was too weak; the heavy stones could not be loosened, and there was not even a bit of wood in the cell.

It is well known that necessity is the mother of invention, and that desperate cases require desperate remedies. The necessity of the case suggested to Coyle the idea of applying a petard to the door, after the manner of engineers of olden times. The heavy lock would answer as a petard, and he had a flask of his pistol-powder in his pocket, with which he could charge the engine.

He had no sooner conceived the idea than he acted upon it. First taking the precaution to reload his pistols, he inserted the rest of the powder into the lock, through the keyhole, pushing it into the crevices, and ramming it down as well as he could. Then he tore off a narrow strip of his linen, of which he made a fuse, with the aid of a little dampened powder that he had saved for that purpose. He connected one end with the powder in the lock, lighted the other end with the cigar-smoker's ever-ready match, and retired to a corner of the cell to await the result.

The explosion, in that confined space, seemed very loud and



violent, and its effects were highly satisfactory, although different from those that the young man had contemplated. The door had been strained and cracked, but was not otherwise injured, while the plate of the lock had been driven with great force against the opposite wall of the cell, and the lock itself was shattered and twisted out of shape.

When the smoke had partially settled, Frank examined the broken lock, and perceived that the bolt had been somewhat bent by the explosion. He was too well pleased with the result of his experiment thus far, to allow himself to be daunted by this circumstance, and he set to work with his dagger and the iron plate that had been blown from the door. It was a difficult task, but he finally succeeded in forcing back the bolt, and the stout door swung open on its rusty and creaking hinges.

When he had accomplished this much, as the afternoon was well advanced, and he was tired, Frank thought it best to finish the remainder of his bread and water, before proceeding further. This done, he went out into the hall to see what other obstructions there were between him and freedom.

He found that the door which led into the street was also very strong, and was secured by a heavy lock. This lock he attacked with his iron plate, and labored vigorously for some time, without making any impression upon it. He was about to abandon the undertaking, and to seek another way of exit from the building, as he had no more powder, when he heard some one at the door, and there was a loud rapping on the outside. He hammered on the wood with the butt of his pistol in reply, and the person outside went away.

In a few moments he returned with others, and there was a heavy blow against the door, as if it was struck with some heavy and solid object. Frank stood back, with his hands on his pistols, ready to greet those outside as friends, or to encounter them as foes.

Another blow resounded against the door, which cracked and shook, seeming ready to fall. Another blow followed, which drove it from its hinges and sent it clattering down upon the stone floor. With a shout, several Texan soldiers rushed through the opening.

"Texas and liberty!" exclaimed Frank Coyle, as they were



about to seize him, and then Bill Robbins ran up, grasped the hand of his young friend, and shook it vigorously.

"Don't you know him, boys?" asked the old hunter. "This is Frank Coyle—our Captain Coyle, a true man and a sure shot. Captain Hays, here is some one you will be glad to see. Come up, you Man in Green, and see a dead American brought to life. Whar' did you come from, Master Frank, and what in thunder made you shut yourself up in here?"

"Follow me, and I will show you where I came from," said the young man, when he had answered the greetings and inquiries of his friends.

He led the way to the cell which he had left a short time before, and pointed it out to them.

"How did you manage to get out of there?" asked Captain Hays.

"I happened to have a flask of powder in my pocket, with which I tried to blow open the door, and succeeded in blowing up the lock. The outer door would have failed me, if you had not happened to arrive."

"Who put you in? What sort of a difficulty have you had?"

Frank told as much of his story as he chose to, concluding with Padre Augustin's benevolent declaration that he should be left to starve, and Bill Robbins shook his head and looked very wise.

"I always told you, Master Frank," said the honest hunter, "that those black eyes would bring you into trouble, and now you see that I was right. If we hadn't wanted to get into this house, you might have stayed thar' till you starved."

"I thought I was in a fair way to get out," answered Coyle; "and I am sure that I would not have stayed here long; but I am none the less obliged to you for your assistance. Why was it that you wanted to enter this house?"

"We thought we'd have a mighty good chance, up thar' on the roof, to pick off the gunners in the squar', and we ought to be about it now, 'stead of losin' time down here."

"That is true. I wish I could help you, but I have no rifle."

"Here is one," said a voice which Frank at once recognized,



and, looking round, he saw standing near him the Man in Green, who handed him a rifle and its ammunition.

"This rifle," said the old man, "belonged to the only soldier who has been killed on our side to-day. Take it, and avenge his death. Take it, and kill the greasers! Kill them! kill them!"

Coyle thankfully accepted the weapon, and the party proceeded to the housetop, where they were within easy range of the public square, and poured down upon its defenders a close, well-aimed and deadly fire, the effect of which was immediately visible.

It was now evening, and the Mexicans, in addition to their cannon that were planted in the square and on the church, were aided by the artillery of the Alamo. The combined and well-directed fire of the guns swept the streets, compelling the Texans to take advantage of every possible cover, and to use great caution as they advanced toward the main point of attack.

Nevertheless, in the face of these heavy odds, and opposed by three times their number of the best troops of Mexico, they continued to advance, and to drive the enemy slowly but surely. Numbers of the volunteers, following the example of Captain Hays and his party, broke into houses, and crept from housetop to housetop, until they obtained positions from which they could use their rifles with fatal effect. Several times the batteries were silenced by the accurate fire of those deadly rifles, and several times the artillerists were compelled to abandon their guns and seek shelter.

During three days the fight continued, from street to street, and from house to house. The Texans still pressed forward slowly but surely, and gained many advantages; but a number of their officers had been killed and wounded, including the gallant Colonel Milam, who was shot through the head; they were worn out by days and nights of incessant fighting; and they were weak and suffering from lack of food. The party with Captain Hays, however, was well supplied in this respect, as the Man in Green obtained an abundance of provisions from some mysterious source, which he conveyed to the house where his comrades had their head-quarters, and they were sumptuously regaled on meat and bread and wine.



which kept them in good spirits, and enabled them to stand up to their work well.

Frank Coyle, although he was free, and in no danger of starving to death, had a very heavy weight upon his mind—he was troubled about Maria Saluda. It was several days since he had seen her, and he knew that she must believe him to be dead, or in some serious difficulty, as it was certain that neither the priest nor Colonel Allende would tell her what had really become of him. It was very likely, and he could not help fearing, that they had taken advantage of the disturbances occasioned by the siege, to convey her out of the city, and to lodge her in one of the convents below, or to take her to Mexico by some circuitous route.

Frank was so much troubled by these thoughts, that he was on the point, several times, of going to seek her; but it was impossible to reach the public square, as the houses facing it had been loop-holed, and were filled with soldiers, whose fire effectually aided the artillery in its defense. Besides, he could not leave his command, to which he had been called by the unanimous voice of the party, Captain Hays having been severely wounded.

In this state of mind, tortured by doubts and fears, he was restless and impatient, and in a fitting mood to undertake any desperate enterprise.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE CAPTURE OF THE PLAZA.

Affairs were at a crisis with the besiegers of Bexar. The men were nearly disheartened by the loss of their leader and the disabling of many other officers, and were so thoroughly exhausted by their continuous labors, that they felt they would be unable to fight much longer. It was evident that something desperate and decisive must be done; that a sudden and vigorous assault, like that by which they forced an entrance into the city, must be made upon the fortifications of the



plaza. Unless that point was gained, they would be compelled to retreat ignominiously, and all their labor and loss of life would be thrown away.

Fortunately for the future of Texas, and for the honor of her arms, there were not wanting brave and resolute men among the volunteers, who were ready for just such a daring enterprise—ready to face any danger, and to encounter any obstacle, in the cause of liberty. Among the foremost of these was Frank Coyle, who had a double motive for wishing to expel the Mexicans from their intrenchments, and who animated the party that he commanded with his own ardent and enthusiastic spirit.

His example was followed by the other officers, and the men who disliked inaction and the slow and exhausting labor of a siege, were willing and glad to follow any one who would lead them to the assault. A plan of operations was agreed upon, and the first favorable night was selected as the time for carrying it out.

The night of the 8th proved to be a favorable one, as the moon was partly concealed by clouds, and the assault was ordered.

Silently, and with all possible caution, keeping in the shadow of the houses, and covering themselves from view, the Texans stole along the streets from different directions, converging near the fortified buildings, which were the point of attack.

They reached the appointed place without being perceived, and then, with cheers and wild yells, suddenly broke into the houses, from which the surprised and frightened soldiers fled pell-mell, leaving their guns in the hands of the assailants.

The Texans turned the guns upon the public square, into which they poured so close and hot a fire, that the Mexicans, bewildered by the unexpected attack, and terrified at receiving a fire which they were unable to return with effect, ran out of their intrenchments, and hurried over the bridges, across the river, to the refuge of the Alamo.

Among the first to rush into the plaza in pursuit of the flying enemy, was Frank Coyle, who was closely followed by Bill Robbins, while the Man in Green was just at his side. The latter individual seemed to be absolutely frantic, as he



sprung, with clubbed rifle, upon the unfortunate Mexicans who had not yet been able to escape. The wretches were as much frightened by his strange appearance, and by the wildness of his actions, as by his formidable weapon, and they fell before him almost without resistance.

"Kill them!" he shouted. "Kill the infernal greasers and spare none! It is a just and holy deed, for the word has gone forth, and they must all die! Kill them! Kill them!"

Frank Coyle, having another object in view than the slaughter of Mexicans, turned toward the house of Señora Ladega. As he reached the door, Colonel Allende rushed out, armed with a sword, and attacked him violently. He, also, was half frantic with rage and excitement.

"Where is my bride, you cursed spy?" he exclaimed. "What have you done with Señorita Saluda, you Yankee dog?"

"I know nothing about her; but I know that you are my prisoner, you cowardly assassin," answered Frank, as he beat up the Colonel's sword with his rifle, stepped in under his guard, and seized him by the collar, throwing him into the arms of a squad of Texans.

"Take care of that man, and see that he does not escape, for he is a prisoner of importance," said the young man, again approaching the door of Señora Ladega's house.

He had gone but a few steps when he saw the Man in Green lying prostrate on the ground, near the inner row of piles that formed part of the fortifications. Supposing that he had been shot, Frank knelt down by his side and examined him, but soon discovered that he had fallen in a sort of fit, for his face was a ghastly, greenish white, his mouth was covered with foam, and his hands and feet twitched convulsively.

Calling some men to his assistance, Frank raised him up, and carried him into an adjoining house, where a liberal dashing of water on his face soon brought him to his senses. At first he looked around wildly, but he immediately recovered his self-possession, and waved his hand, as if he wished the room to be cleared.

"Is there any thing more that I can do for you?" asked Coyle.



"Nothing, except to leave me," replied the old man, taking a small vial from his breast-pocket.

Frank instantly obeyed him, and again started toward Señora Ladega's house; but it seemed that he was destined not to enter it, for he was met by Bill Robbins, who was leading a Mexican officer by the arm.

"Here he is, Master Frank! I've got him!" shouted the old hunter. "He is my prisoner, taken fairly in lawful war, and I've got a sneakin' idee that he don't feel very bad about it, neither. He saw you, and he says he thinks he knows you, so I brought him to you."

Frank looked at the prisoner, and immediately recognized the handsome face and pleasant smile of Captain Del Rios. He advanced and greeted him cordially.

"I hardly know," said the captain, "whether I ought to take your hand, for it seems that I have been harboring a spy, when I thought my friend was a Cuban neutral."

"You are slightly mistaken, Del Rios, for I did not enter Bexar as a spy, though I did not object to avail myself of such information as I could pick up. I came for an entirely different purpose."

"I now know what your purpose was. I learned it from the worthy and disinterested Padre Augustin, to whom I naturally went to inquire concerning you, when you failed to return to your lodgings.

"What did that sacerdotal villain tell you?"

"He gave me to understand that you had been forcing your attentions upon Señorita Saluda, and that her friends were obliged to interfere to protect her from you. I had an idea that the attention was not all on one side, for I was not so blind as to be unable to guess where you spent a good portion of your time. The padre also told me that you had been discovered to be an American spy, instead of a Cuban gentleman, but I refused to believe it, until they produced another man, who claimed to be the genuine Cuban, and my faith was staggered."

"It is true, then, that the real Señor de Limontado made his appearance here?"

"It was either himself or some one they had employed to represent the character."



"Did the padre tell you where I was?"

"He said that it had been thought necessary to place you in confinement until you could be tried by the proper authorities."

"A pretty sort of confinement it was," laughed Coyle. "They shut me up in a close dungeon, and plainly informed me that I was to be left there alone, until I starved to death. Such would have been my fate, I suppose, if I had not escaped by my own exertions and the assistance of my friends."

"You surprise me. The incarnate devils deserve something worse than hanging. If I had known that, I would have turned all Bexar upside-down to find you, whether you were a spy or not. I intended to make inquiries, and to see what could be done in the matter, but the Texans made an attack, and I had no time for any thing outside of my duty."

"All's well that ends well, captain, and I thank you for the will as I would have thanked you for the deed. You are my prisoner, now, for I suppose my friend will resign his claim in my favor."

"Of course, Master Frank," said Robbins.

"You are my prisoner, then, Del Rios, and you must consider yourself under parole at present. If any one questions you, say that you have been paroled by Captain Frank Coyle. And now, can you tell me what has become of Señorita Saluda, or where we will be likely to find her?"

"I can not; I wish I could; but I am afraid that Allende has carried her off. Have you examined the house?"

"Not yet, and I think it is hardly worth while to do so, for I met Colonel Allende a short time ago, as he came out from there, and he fiercely demanded that I should tell him where she was, and what I had done with her. He attacked me with his sword at the same time, and I took him prisoner."

"If she had been in the house, he would certainly have found her, and it is useless to search there. I think we had better go down to the bridge, to make inquiries and watch who passes."

"Don't you go, Master Frank," said Robbins, sagely shaking his head. "Those black eyes have brought you into trouble enough already, and they'll be the death of you if you keep chasin' them up."



"Don't be so very fearful, old friend," replied Frank. "There is no danger, now, and I am not on a wild-goose chase."

"If you are bound to go, Master Frank, I will go with you, for I don't want to trust you out of my sight again."

The three men hastened down to the bridge, where they saw, in the bright moonlight, the last of the Mexican fugitives, on the other side of the river, hurrying toward the Alamo, and among the throng, they espied a close carriage, drawn by a pair of mules. At the same instant they perceived a tall man, dressed in the robe of a priest, walking rapidly across the bridge, and Coyle and Del Rios at once recognized him as Padre Augustin.

Frank leveled his rifle, and was about to fire at the villain who had proposed to starve him to death, when his attention was distracted by the appearance of the Man in Green, who rushed by him like a shot, and ran out upon the bridge, shouting and uttering cries that they could not understand.

He overtook Padre Augustin a little beyond the middle of the bridge, and the priest turned and faced him, drawing a long knife.

Two bright blades flashed in the moonlight; then the men clinched, and soon the Man in Green was seen lifted up bodily by the brawny arms of the priest, and hurled into the dark water, where he sunk, and was seen no more.

"He wasn't a witch, that's certain," wisely remarked Robbins; "for a witch wouldn't have sunk so easy."

Padre Augustin, with a mocking laugh, ran over to the other side of the river, regardless of a bullet that Coyle sent after him, and the guns of the Alamo opened fire to protect the retreat of the Mexicans.

The three companions, after waiting in vain for the reappearance of the Man in Green, returned to Señora Ladega's mansion. They ransacked the house from top to bottom, but did not find Maria Saluda. Concluding that she had been carried away by her "protectors," they abandoned the search, and, as all were very weary and worn out, they disposed themselves to sleep upon the soft beds that tempted them so invitingly.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE GHOST IN GREEN

THE next morning a white flag was seen waving over the Alamo, in place of the red and black colors that had threatened "no quarter" to the assailants, and the fort, together with the entire Mexican garrison, and all their arms, stores and munitions of war, surrendered to the brave volunteers of Texas. The articles of capitulation were signed in the course of the day, and the line of the San Antonio was virtually in the possession of the liberators.

Frank Coyle and Captain Del Rios prepared to go over to the Alamo, as soon as the surrender was announced, for the purpose of seeking the missing Señorita Saluda, but their preparations were interrupted by Robbins, who informed them that an old man was at the door, desiring to see Mr. Coyle.

The visitor was shown up, and proved to be the Jew, Isaac. Frank had frequently thought of the old man, while the fighting was going on in the city, and had conjectured that he was keeping himself in some secure hiding-place, for fear of being molested, in person or property, during the excitement. He now joyfully greeted the friendly Jew, and requested him to be seated.

"So you have taken Bexar at last," said Isaac, with a slight twinkle in his gray eyes.

"Yes, we have taken Bexar; but I am still in trouble, old man, and I do not know how I shall get clear of my trouble, unless you can assist me."

"What is the matter? Do you need money? If you do, I have some to lend you."

"I want no money at present, but I do want Señorita Saluda. Do you know where she is, or do you know any thing about her?"

"Have you sought her already?"

I have searched high and low, but can not find any trace of her. Colonel Allende knows nothing of her whereabouts, as I took him prisoner while he was looking for her."



"Where is the Padre Augustin?"

"He has escaped, and I am afraid that the Señorita has been taken across the river, and carried beyond my reach."

"If they have taken her away, you need not hope to see her again. It is possible, however, that she has not gone. I shall be happy to assist you in your search, if I can be of service, but I wish, in the first place, that you would come with me to my house, as I have some business to transact with you. Your friend may come also, if he wishes. He is a good young man."

Frank was anxious to renew the search for Maria Saluda, but he hoped that more might be accomplished by the aid of Isaac, and he consented to accompany him. The Jew led the way, followed by Coyle and Del Rios, and Bill Robbins brought up the rear with his rifle, for he was determined not to let his young friend get out of his sight again.

When they reached the room which Isaac occupied as an office, the old man opened the door of the inner apartment, and invited them to enter. They did so, and Frank found himself, to his great joy and astonishment, in the presence of Maria Saluda!

"It seems to me that I am rather in the way here," suggested Captain Del Rios, as he sadly witnessed the meeting of the lovers.

"Not at all, my dear friend," replied Coyle. "Take a seat, and we will talk about business. I owe you an explanation, and must inform you that I met this young lady at Natchitoches, some time ago. I have loved her with my whole heart ever since I first saw her. She then promised to become my wife when she could get clear of those who claimed to be her protectors. That time has arrived at last, and I hope the promise will soon be performed."

"That is entirely satisfactory, although it is painful to me," said Del Rios. "Will the fair señorita have the kindness to tell us where she has been concealed, and how she contrived to escape the kindly vigilance of Padre Augustin?"

"It is not much of a story," blushing answered Maria. "I told Señor Coyle, in this room, that I was ready for any emergency, and he now perceives that I was not boasting. My aunt informed me that the Texans had made an attack



upon Bexar, and directed me to prepare to leave the city. I caused her to postpone the departure, on one pretext and another, until she declared that she could wait no longer. It was then arranged that I should leave yesterday afternoon, in a close carriage, together with my aunt, Padre Augustin, and Colonel Allende. When the appointed hour arrived, I slipped up to my room, from which I entered this house, by a secret passage that had been contrived for me by my good friend, Isaac. I listened to the noise and excitement when they learned that I was missing. I heard my aunt screaming, the padre calling on the saints, and Allende cursing at the top of his voice; but I kept quiet in my concealment, and laughed at them with impunity. The search continued until last night, when the attack was made on the plaza, when my aunt insisted on going without me, and was driven away in the carriage. Afterward I heard some people ransacking the house, and I knew it was you, for I went in and listened; but I thought I had better return here, and do nothing until I could see my old friend, Isaac."

"We saw a carriage cross the river last night," said Del Rios, "and we concluded that you were in it. You can imagine, then, our surprise and pleasure at seeing you this morning. As for Padre Augustin, he has fled from the city, and Allende is a prisoner. I suppose, señorita, that you and Señor Coyle will now have something to say to each other, and I will leave you for the present."

The captain bowed himself out at the door, and was followed by Robbins, who refused to go further than the outer room.

"I do really believe," muttered the hunter, as he took a seat, "that I would butt my head ag'inst any stone wall for such a pair of black eyes as those, but I think Master Frank needs watchin' yet."

Frank Coyle did have something to say to Maria Saluda, and that something was very important to both. Its purport was, that he wished her to become his wife without delay, so that he might have a right to protect her from Padre Augustin, from Colonel Allende, or from any other person. She was alone, he argued, without any natural guardian, in a country that was convulsed and distracted by war, and it was



necessary that she should have some one to lean upon. If she intended to marry him, there was no time like the present, for he could then carry her to a peaceful and quiet part of the country, where she would be out of the reach of all harm.

Maria naturally objected to such haste, although she admitted the force of her lover's reasoning. She thought that the ceremony might at least be deferred until the excitement in the city could have time to subside, and concluded by urging the powerful plea that she had "nothing to wear."

The old Jew, as a mutual friend, was called in to assist their deliberations, and when the case was stated to him, he at once gave it as his opinion that Coyle was right, and that the marriage ought not to be delayed. It was impossible to foresee, he said, what might happen, even in the course of a few days, and it was the part of wisdom to secure a certainty when the opportunity was offered. For himself, he intended to leave Bexar, and could be of no more service to Señora Saluda.

Maria at last yielded to the importunities of her lover, and consented that the marriage should take place the next day. Captain Del Rios, when he was informed of this arrangement, could not conceal a feeling of chagrin, mingled with genuine sorrow; but he soon threw off his despondency, and assisted in the preparations with his usual good-humor and alacrity. Through his instrumentality a priest was found, who was desirous of gaining favor with the "conquerors," and who consented to perform the ceremony, after satisfying himself that there was no legal objection to the marriage.

On the afternoon of the next day, the church in the square was opened, and its dark exterior was lighted by a few candles. There was neither a large nor a fashionable assemblage present at the wedding, although it might have been called a marriage in high life; but a number of officers and men of the Texan army were present desirous of seeing one of themselves united to a Mexican heiress, and a few of the inhabitants of Bexar loitered into the church, rather to gratify their curiosity, than because they felt any real interest in the proceedings.

Frank would have preferred the marriage to be solemnized privately, in the house of Señora Ladega, but in this he was overruled by Maria, who had some religious scruples in



favor of being married in a church, and by the priest, who positively refused to perform the ceremony, unless it should take place in public.

Frank Coyle and his intended bride stood in front of the altar, behind which was the officiating priest, attended by an assistant. By the side of Señorita Saluda was placed Captain Del Rios, and at Frank's left hand stood Bill Robbins, who had been induced to lay aside his rifle for a short time. Near them were gathered Captain Hays and some other personal friends of Coyle's.

The ceremony commenced, and the priest proceeded to read the service; but Frank had not made his first response, when, to the astonishment of all, the tall form of Padre Augustin was seen to rise up in the church; and he interrupted the priest by protesting against the proceedings in a loud voice.

"In the name of the holy Church," he exclaimed, "and in the name of Señora Ladega, the aunt of Señorita Saluda, and her nearest living relative, whom I am authorized to represent, I forbid this marriage, and declare that the displeasure of the Church shall be visited upon whoever shall dare to solemnize it!"

The officiating priest trembled, hesitated, and ceased to read the service, for Padre Augustin was well known as "one having authority," and his interdict carried great weight with it.

Frank Coyle was almost struck dumb at first, by the unparalleled impudence of the padre in thus thrusting himself forward at such a time and place, and he was about to order the arrest of the audacious intruder, when another voice, shrill but firm, came from a side aisle.

"The marriage is legal, and I allow it. Let it proceed!"

Old Isaac, the Jew, who had spoken these words, stepped up to the altar, and laid a paper upon it.

"Who are you, sir?" asked the priest.

"I am Francisco Saluda, as that paper will prove, the uncle of this young lady, and her natural guardian, as her only living male relative."

Suddenly the old Jew threw off his long serge coat, and tore away his heavy, gray beard, and Frank Coyle's surprise was complete, as he saw before him the well-known form and garb of the Man in Green, who had so lately been drowned before his eyes.



The countenance of Padre Augustin, at the sight of this apparition, was something fearful to behold. Between rage and terror his face turned a vivid purple, his outstretched hands were clinched, as if grasping some invisible object, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

"Can the dead rise twice?" he exclaimed, in a harsh and unnatural voice. "Have you come once more to trouble me, you twice-killed dog? May the curse of heaven blight me, if I let you cross my path again!"

Drawing a knife, he rushed fiercely upon the Man in Green, who sprung forward to meet him, and they clinched together any one present could think of interfering.

In another moment, both were lying on the floor which was stained with blood. The bystanders hastened to separate them, but found them breathing their last. The knife of the Man in Green was buried in the heart of the priest, and the bony fingers of the latter were clinched, in a death grip, on the throat of his antagonist.

Thus were forever settled the hate and vengeance of many years.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### CONCLUSION.

AFTER this desperate and bloody encounter, it was, of course, impossible that the marriage ceremony should proceed. The officiating priest closed his book, and left the altar with his assistant; Maria Saluda, who had fainted, was revived and led from the church by Frank Coyle; and the bodies of the two mortal foes were taken care of by some of the Texans.

The paper that had been laid upon the altar by the Man in Green was an official certification by a notary, to the effect that the bearer, who had been known as Isaac, the Jew, was in reality Francisco Saluda, the brother of Maria's father, who had been so long missing, and who was supposed to be dead. The body was examined by a few of the old citizens of Bexar



who had been well acquainted with the deceased, and who recognized the features, from certain indications, as those of Francisco Saluda. His remains were interred in the vault of the Saludas, and Frank and Maria were sincere mourners at the funeral. The body of Padre Augustin was taken in charge by his fellow priests.

Although the wedding had been so unceremoniously and unpleasantly interrupted, it was not destined to be indefinitely postponed. After the burial of her uncle, Frank Coyle's importunities again prevailed upon Maria; and the priest consented to perform the ceremony at the house of Señora Ladega.

They were married, accordingly, in the presence of a few friends, without having the fear of Padre Augustin before their eyes, and the knot was tied that put an end to the pretensions of Colonel Allende.

Bill Robbins seemed to derive considerable satisfaction from the fact that the Man in Green had been proved, by the result of the conflict in the church, to be mortal; but he was careful to follow the body to the tomb, to see that it was securely confined, and to watch it when it was placed in the vault, from which it was not reasonable to suppose that it could escape. When this was done, he became more cheerful, and participated in the happiness of Frank and Maria, as heartily as if his own son had been married.

The day after the marriage, when Frank Coyle and his wife were seated in a pleasant room in the Saluda mansion, together with Captain Del Rios and the inevitable Robbins, Frank asked Maria what she knew about her uncle, and what were the particulars of his disappearance.

"I know so little about him," she answered, "that it may almost be said that I know nothing, for I have not seen him since I was a child, and of late years I have not even heard his name mentioned. I have understood that he had fallen under the displeasure of the Church, and that he had some bitter enemies; but I never learned who they were. I have been told that his wife, who was an American Protestant and said to be very beautiful, was supposed to have been murdered, together with her child, on a journey from Matamoras to Bexar, and that my uncle disappeared soon afterward, without leaving any trace by which to ascertain his fate. As the greater



part of his property, in money and jewels, was also missing, it was thought that he had been robbed and murdered. I know nothing more about him, and was as much surprised as any one at his appearance in the church."

"How long had you known him as old Isaac, the Jew?"

"Only since my return to Bexar. He was employed by my aunt to transact some business for me, in the course of which I became acquainted with him, and in a short time we were quite intimate."

As this was the extent of the information that Frank could obtain on the subject, he was obliged to rely upon his own observations and conjectures in forming an opinion concerning the Man in Green. He then saw him, as he thought, in the true light, as a man who had been partially crazed by cruel wrongs, and who hated, most intensely, the perpetrators of these wrongs and their entire race. It was certain that Padre Augustin had been among his persecutors, and his bitterness toward the priests was thus accounted for. His fits of temporary insanity, it appeared, only attacked him occasionally, at times when he was greatly excited, or in battle, or in pursuit of those whom he called his enemies, the "greasers." When his brain was not thus affected, he was a quiet, cool, cautious and sagacious man of business, though he never forgot his wrongs, nor ceased to cherish the desire for vengeance.

With regard to the assistance that he rendered Robbins, Frank learned that he had gained a powerful influence, by means of money, over the keeper of the prison, and had been allowed to make and retain a master key, with which he could effect an entrance at any time.

His reappearance, after he had apparently been drowned, was also easily accounted for, on the supposition that he had made the attack on the priest when he was in a frenzied condition, and that his sudden immersion in the water had brought him back to his senses, so that he was able to swim to the shore, unseen, and thus save his life.

The cause of the peculiar color of his skin remained unknown, though it was thought possible that some poisonous liquid might have been injected into his veins, or introduced into his system, by his persecutors, for some diabolical purpose.



Colonel Allende was released with the other officers of the Mexican garrison, and went back to Mexico, vowing a vengeance that was never executed. As Captain Del Rios still remained in Bexar, Coyle asked him how he intended to dispose of himself.

"That is a question for you to decide," answered the captain. "I am inclined to think that I am not included in the capitulation, as I was captured before the surrender. I would prefer, if you please, to be paroled, on condition that I shall not again bear arms against Texas during the war, and if my superiors refuse to recognize the parole, I must resign my position."

The noble-hearted young gentleman was paroled according to his request, and he remained with his friends until their departure from Bexar.

When the young people examined the house that had been occupied by the Man in Green as Isaac, the Jew, they found there a carefully-prepared and duly-attested will of Francisco Saluda, by which all his property, real and personal, of considerable value, was bequeathed to his "beloved niece, Maria Saluda," who thus became an heiress indeed.

As soon as a conveyance could be obtained, Frank Coyle took his bride to the pleasant old town of Natchitoches, which he had fixed upon as a temporary residence. After the fall of the Alamo, however, and the massacre of Goliad, his patriotism and martial spirit impelled him to take up arms, and he distinguished himself at the battle of San Jacinto, by which the independence of Texas was so nobly achieved. Then he devoted himself to the improvement of his plantation on the Brazos, which he made one of the finest estates in Texas.

Bill Robbins continued to lead the life of a hunter, until his strength and sight failed him, when he had a pleasant home with Frank Coyle during the remainder of his days.







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Dese launs vot Mary hat	Te peaser vay,	Peggy McCann,	The Nereides,
got,	On learning German,	Sprays from Josh Bil	Legend's of Attica,
Pat O'Flaherty on wo	Mary's shinnall vite lamb	lungs,	The stov & vips tragedy
man's rights,	A healthy discourse,	De circumstances ob de	A dokter's drubbles,
The home rulers, how	Tobias w'to speak,	situation,	The con. ng man,
they "spakes,"	Old Mrs. Grimes,	Dar's nuffin new under	The illigant affair of
Hezekiah Dawson on	A parody,	de sun,	Muldoon's,
Mothers in-law,	Mars and cats,	A Negro religious poem,	That little baby re of
He didn't sell the farm.	Bill Underwood, pilot,	That violin,	the corner,
The true story of Frank	Old Grauley,	Picnic delights,	A genuwine inference.
lin's kite,	The pill peddler's ora-	Our candidate's views,	An invitation to de
I would I were a boy	tion,	Dus dreary's wisdom,	bird of liberty,
again,	Vidder Green's last	Pinn language by truth-	The crow,
A pathetic story,	words,	ful Jane,	Out west.

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